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Paul Gigot

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A Great American Screw-Up

The U.S. and Iraq, 1980–1990

Paul A. Gigot

"Rarely has a government been more expectant. We just expected wrong."

—Thomas Schelling, from the foreword to *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*, by Roberta Wohlstetter

ON JUNE 19, 1981, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin addressed some 5,000 Holocaust survivors at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. Twelve days earlier Israeli warplanes had undertaken a spectacularly successful bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor, Osirak, named after Osiris, the Egyptian god of the dead. "What's the difference if it's radiation and not Zyklon B gas?" Begin justified the bombing to the crowd, according to witness Allan Gerson. "It's still aimed at our children and ourselves."

On the same day at the United Nations, U.S. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick was preparing to cast a vote on the Osirak bombing. She would vote to condemn Israel, not Iraq, for a "clear violation of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international conduct." The Security Council vote was 15–0, without abstentions.

Within the U.S. government, the only debate was whether it should work to strike the word "aggression" from the United Nation's condemnation. Ambassador Kirkpatrick fought to have the word removed, and it finally was. But, she and other officials recall, everyone in the Cabinet and President Reagan himself wanted to condemn the "preemptive violence" of the Israeli attack. No one at a senior level thought that Iraq's potential nuclear capability represented the greater threat to American interests.

The U.S. response to the Osirak bombing is the symbolic beginning of a decade of American misjudgment. The climax was Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, an invasion that caught nearly everyone in the U.S. government by surprise. How could our experts have been so wrong? A complete answer must await the first-hand testimony of officials who made the decisions and, especially, the unveiling of the historical record. But from numerous interviews and the available public record, it is possible to make a few judgments about a foreign-policy tragedy that rivals Dean Acheson's failure to include Korea in the U.S. "containment" perimeter in 1950.

In her classic book on Pearl Harbor, Roberta Wohlstetter writes about the difficulty of selecting genuine policy "signals" from a world of "noise." Once any signals are found, they must then be assessed to see if they should change the prevailing policy "hypothesis." Regarding Iraq, policy-makers all claim to have heard the aggressive signals from Saddam Hussein. "There were no illusions about Saddam," says Richard Murphy,

Paul A. Gigot writes the "Potomac Watch" column for the *Wall Street Journal*.

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the Reagan administration's assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, in a typical comment. And certainly Saddam's signals were loud.

What U.S. officials failed to do, however, was to use those signals to change their hypothesis about Saddam's intentions. They could not shake what even they themselves now call "the mindset" about Iraq. They let the accumulating evidence fit their favored hypothesis, rather than change that hypothesis to fit the new evidence. They had concluded that Saddam's growing threats were meant to coerce concessions from Kuwait, not to invade, even up to the day before the actual invasion.

From this mistake flowed a second one: the failure to signal American intentions. U.S. officials thought that conciliation, rather than a new policy of containment, had a better chance of persuading Saddam not to invade. So when they did send messages warning Saddam, the messages were mixed in a way that Saddam could plausibly interpret as appeasement. Perhaps U.S. officials are right to say that nothing they could have said or done would have stopped Saddam from invading; no one can know. But what is indisputable is that U.S. policy offered no deterrent to his invasion.

Perhaps most troubling, the failures were systemic. There are few heroes in this drama, and none with enough rank to have been able to begin a reconsideration of policy. Certainly no one ranking in the Bush administration is bathed in glory. No senior official played the skeptic that George Ball did toward Vietnam policy under LBJ. In the weeks since the invasion, Congress has tried to take credit for having more prescience than the Bush administration, but this is revisionism. Congress shares responsibility.

The decade of miscalculation has its roots in the Iranian Revolution of 1979. For two decades before the fall of the Shah, the United States had viewed Iran as its strategic bulwark in the Persian Gulf. U.S. relations with Iraq, by contrast, had been virtually non-existent since normal ties were cut in 1967. The rise of Ayatollah Khomeini and the taking of American hostages changed everything.

Suddenly, the United States was Iran's "Great Satan." Iran's new radical leaders vowed to spread their Shiite brand of Islamic fundamentalism throughout the Gulf. Carter administration officials began to turn their attention toward a new "pillar of stability" in the Gulf, Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Howard Teicher, a Defense Department official at the time, who later joined the Reagan National Security Council, wrote a classified fifty-page paper warning of the dangers of this tilt and predicting that Iraq would invade Iran. No one paid much attention. "The prevailing view was that perhaps we could encourage moderation, and work with Iraq," Teicher recalls. By April 1980, National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski could assert that, "We see no fundamental incompatibility of interests between the U.S. and Iraq."

The onset of the Reagan administration accelerated this trend. Even when Iraq invaded Iran, the overriding U.S. view was that Iran was stronger and would be by far the greater threat if it emerged from the war dominant in the region. Publicly, the U.S. remained neutral in the war, but behind the scenes it tilted sharply toward Iraq. "There was a snowballing effect," says Teicher. "There was more and more stuff we were doing with the Iraqis."

THE UNITED States, in effect, became Iraq's silent ally. In 1982, the U.S. took Iraq off its list of nations promoting terrorism. A year later it launched Operation Staunch, an attempt to persuade other nations to stop selling arms to Iran. No similar effort was made toward Iraq, which became a favorite arms customer of France and the Soviet Union, among other nations. We began to share intelligence information with Iraq and, by 1984, the U.S. and Iraq had resumed full diplomatic relations. This decision unleashed official credit guarantees that, by

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1990, had amounted to a U.S. taxpayer exposure in Iraq in the billions of dollars, according to Lally Weymouth.

The final, and perhaps decisive, tilt was the U.S. decision to reflag Kuwaiti tankers in 1987. Though Iraq had started the so-called tanker war, Iran had escalated it to include shipping from Iraq's Arab allies. The reflagging made it difficult for Iran to attack Iraq's supply lines through Kuwait.

Throughout this period, it should be said, Iraq did show a more moderate face toward the West. It became less hostile to the Arab-Israeli peace process. Saddam expelled some (but not all) leading terrorists from Baghdad. Iraq's ambassador to Washington for most of the 1980s, Nizar Hamdoon, had a soothing, conniving charm similar to that of South Korea's Tongsun Park in the 1970s. When an Iraqi missile hit an American warship in the Gulf, the *USS Stark*, Saddam quickly apologized and paid $27 million to the families of the thirty-seven victims.

Other Arabs made a point of underscoring the "change" in Saddam's behavior. Teicher recalls a meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in April 1982: "Mubarak gave me a fifteen-minute lecture about how Iraq had changed. He said, 'You have to do everything you can to make Iraq survive the war. You have to tell President Reagan.' He kept shaking my hand and wouldn't let go." The combined impact of this effort was that a large portion of America's policy elite concluded that Saddam really was "someone we could work with."

There were a few dissenters, of course. Teicher and Graham Fuller, a CIA analyst at the time, collaborated on a memo in 1985 that became notorious during the Iran-*contra* hearings two years later. They argued that Iran remained a strategic prize that should not be ignored, and that Saddam's domestic barbarity meant his "change" might be cosmetic. Their views were debated and rejected.

But that rejection, perhaps understandable at the time, took on a tragic cast during the Iran-*contra* hearings. Their memo was interpreted by Congress as the intellectual basis for President Reagan's failed opening and sale of arms to Iran. Congressional investigators scorned any attempt to deal with Iran as futile, even absurd, but they never questioned the ongoing assistance to Iraq. Peter Galbraith, a Senate Foreign Relations and Iran-*contra* Committee aide, says the Iraqis gave him extraordinary access to Iraqi Kurdistan in 1987 in large part because "the Iraqi Ambassador thought we were doing the Lord's work."

But anyone even remotely associated with the opening to Iran was forced out of government. Teicher, for one, was purged from the NSC. The consequences would echo through the events of 1990. "No one who saw what happened to us was going to come near engaging with Iran at any level," says Teicher. Congress's Iran-*contra* vendetta must bear some of the responsibility for creating an environment in which dissenters on the Gulf could not be heard.

Iran's surprising decision to end the war, in August 1988, offered a new chance for the United States to reassess its Gulf policy. Instead, even as the strategic circumstances changed, "the mindset" continued.

In late August, ethnic Kurds began streaming over the Iraqi border into Turkey. Their testimony and physical condition—discolored and burned skin, blurred vision, shortness of breath—provided evidence that Iraq had used chemical weapons against its own population. The Reagan administration—and the rest of the West—reacted with what can politely be called restraint. The State Department publicly condemned the attack, but privately also sent a message of conciliation to Iraq. As one State official told the *New York Times* on September 8, 1988: "The approach we want to take is that, 'We want to have a good relationship with you, but that this sort of thing makes it very difficult.' "

The mixed message continued as a battle raged in Congress over U.S. sanctions against Iraq. Secretary of State George Shultz privately complained to Iraq's foreign minister and received a promise that Iraq would not

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use gas again and would attend an arms-control conference the next January. "It was enough to persuade us that working on it privately was enough to be productive," says Murphy, State's Middle East point man at the time. "And sanctions would not be productive."

After the chemical attacks, the Senate passed tough unilateral sanctions, 87–0. The Reagan administration responded with ferocious lobbying that first watered the sanctions down, then finally killed them. The administration never offered a compromise for even modest sanctions. American businesses with sales to Iraq—rice millers, chemical companies, and others—also lobbied furiously against sanctions. In the end, House Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Dante Fascell asked that sanctions be stripped from the tax bill to which they had earlier been attached. Galbraith says he received a 5 a.m. call on the last day of the session informing him that the sanctions had been pulled in the dead of night.

It is impossible to know if U.S. sanctions in 1988, or later in 1990, would have changed Saddam's behavior. But it is possible to speculate on the lesson Saddam learned about Western resolve after his chemical attacks. "He learned that his actions would be met solely with rhetorical opposition," says Galbraith. Saddam had committed a horrendous act—the first use of gas since Hitler—yet his only cost was to have one of his senior aides politely dressed down by George Shultz.

Meanwhile, inside the State Department, a prominent member of the policy planning staff was urging a wholesale change in Gulf policy. Zalmay Khalilzad, a Columbia University professor hired to offer advice on Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, wrote the most prescient piece of analysis produced about the Gulf in the U.S. government. He concluded that Iraq had replaced Iran as the foremost threat to American interests in the region.

The Khalilzad logic was geopolitical: Iran had emerged from the war far weaker than anyone had thought, so weak that it could no longer perform its historic "balancing" role against Iraq. The threat of promoting Shiite fundamentalism was gone. The new Gulf threat came from the potential for Iraqi regional dominance. According to a source familiar with it, the memo argued that, "The logic of power is that a regional hegemon would want any external power out of the region." That meant it was only a matter of time before Saddam would agitate against any American presence. So the United States should make overtures to Iran, ending both the trade embargo and Operation Staunch, and consider a "containment" strategy against Iraq.

Khalilzad's memo received wide internal circulation and was debated at the highest levels. But as one official familiar with the period observes, "That was pissing into the wind in Washington, and still is." Eventually, the policy review suffered the fate of many such efforts: it was leaked to the press. A story in the *New York Times* described the effort as an attempt "by middle-level officials to re-evaluate American policy toward Iran." A November election loomed, and the Reagan administration was coming to an end. The review was killed.

IN 1989, the incoming Bush administration had another chance to reconsider Gulf policy. It did conduct a long "strategic review," but its conclusions were close to those of the Reagan team.

This is not surprising, given that many of the new Bush appointees had also helped make earlier Mideast policy. Richard Haass, the new Middle East point man at the NSC, had worked in the Defense Department when the Carter administration began to consider overtures to Iraq. Dennis Ross, now head of State's policy planning shop, had worked in the late Reagan NSC before joining the Bush presidential campaign. His new deputy, Bill Burns, had worked with him at the NSC. And Richard Fairbanks, who headed the Bush campaign's Middle East policy team, had also worked on Middle East issues in the Reagan years. By then out of government, Fairbanks

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was until recently also Iraq's registered agent in Washington.

Most of these officials knew and understood the strategic arguments made by Khalilzad. But they expressly rejected them. "The mindset" persisted. As one White House official who developed the policy put it, after the Iran-Iraq War "there was a sense that the Gulf had come out of a difficult period and was getting better." Both sides in the war were thought to be exhausted. "The detente analogy" prevailed, says this source. The U.S. might not like everything Iraq did, and might detest its human rights record, "but if we could have a more normal relationship with Iraq, why not try?" In mid-1989, President Bush signed a national security directive implementing detente toward Iraq.

LIKE THE SOVIETS in the 1970s, however, Saddam Hussein refused to cooperate. Beginning in late 1989 through July of 1990, he undertook a series of escalating threats and actions toward his Arab neighbors and the United States that everyone agrees signaled hostile intentions. Zalmay Khalilzad's predictions about Saddam's regional ambitions were coming true.

On February 24, 1990, Saddam gave a blistering speech to the Arab Cooperation Council, a regional club meeting in Amman, Jordan. Saddam warned that with declining Soviet power, "the Arab Gulf region will be governed by the wishes of the United States." He implied that no "good" Arabs would want this and so they should look for ways to undermine U.S. influence in the region. In March, Iraqi agents were arrested in Britain for smuggling parts to build nuclear weapons. Then on April 2, Saddam sent a signal even the deaf could hear. He declared he had binary chemical weapons and that, "By God, we will make the fire eat up half of Israel, if it tries to do anything against Iraq."

The April speech inspired the Bush team's only serious reconsideration of its Iraq policy. As early as January, junior aides to Dennis Ross in State's policy planning office had been urging a change to a "containment" policy, including sanctions. Ross was "sympathetic," say sources, but never really focused on the issue. The April remarks finally got his attention. Ross and John Kelly, the assistant secretary for Near Eastern affairs, have told reporters they went to Secretary of State James Baker and urged a new policy of limited sanctions against Iraq. Baker is said to have agreed.

But the policy review died aborning. Baker turned the effort over to Robert Kimmitt, State's undersecretary for political affairs, who made a case to the interagency "deputies committee," a set of officials just below the Cabinet level. Accounts differ on what happened next. By State's account, its initiative died after it met resistance from the Commerce Department and the NSC staff, including NSC adviser Brent Scowcroft.

Other sources, the majority by far, insist that State never really made much of an effort. "My impression was they were worried more about public positioning than about the policy," says one official. Another claims, "I don't know what was said to the secretary, but State did not represent a policy position that was at variance with anyone else's." The meeting reached a consensus not to renew commodity loan credits to Iraq, but to attribute this decision to a scandal involving a bank. "We tried to de-politicize the decision," says one of the deputies, in order not to risk antagonizing Saddam. (On April 13, the Agriculture Department suspended farm credits, citing not the works of Saddam, but financial irregularities.) The policy review, such as it was, had ended.

The review's failure is partly explained by the way national-security advice is transmitted to President Bush. The administration really has two national-security policy systems. The first, and least important, is the formal interagency process, led by the NSC. But this NSC staff is one of the least powerful in years, and its leader, Scowcroft, is a cautious man who is more manager than strategic thinker. The other, much less formal, system is dominated by George Bush's close friend, James Baker, his small team of

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aides, and whatever allies they seek to include. This second system is the route by which virtually every major national-security policy change has been made during the Bush years—for example, the decisions to engage Mikhail Gorbachev and to negotiate with Cambodia.

But this system's strength is also its weakness: it relies on a small nucleus of people, literally a handful of aides. If an issue falls outside their radar screen, it is probably being run on autopilot by the permanent bureaucracy. This is by all accounts what happened toward Iraq. Ross is Baker's Middle East expert, but he is also his main adviser on Soviet policy. Throughout 1990, Ross was preoccupied with Germany, Soviet politics, and arms control, among other issues. For most of the Bush administration, Ross's main Middle East worry was the Arab-Israeli peace process. The Gulf was left to Kelly and his Near East bureau, which would never change policy without guidance from the top. Since that guidance never came with any force, Kelly never sent Saddam Hussein a different message.

Indeed, what is remarkable about the various messages the U.S. sent to Saddam in 1990 is how consistent they were. They never threatened to break relations; they were more carrot than stick. They certainly never drew a line in the sand.

State's spokeswoman quickly denounced Saddam's April speech as "inflammatory, outrageous, and irresponsible." But ten days later, five senators, led by Kansas Republican Bob Dole, met Saddam in the Iraqi city of Mosul. They presented a letter expressing "very deep concerns" about his chemical and biological weapons. The letter said these were "a major barrier to improved relations," but said nothing about current relations. And according to a transcript of their meeting released by the Iraqis (and not disputed, save for minor details, by Dole's office), the senators were less than profiles in indignation.

At the meeting, Dole referred to "[Pennsylvania Senator Arlen] Specter, whom you met and who went away with a very positive impression of you." Dole added that President Bush would probably veto sanctions against Iraq and that, "We in Congress also try to exert our utmost efforts in this direction." Howard Metzenbaum, the Ohio Democrat, chimed in that, "After listening to you for about an hour, I realized you are a strong and an intelligent man, and that you want peace." A month later, Metzenbaum opposed anti-Iraq sanctions in the Senate (but still later supported them).

When Saddam attacked the Western press for distortions, Wyoming Republican Alan Simpson more or less agreed: "I believe your problem is with the Western media, not with the U.S. government, because you are isolated from the media and the press. The press is spoiled and conceited. All the journalists consider themselves brilliant political scientists. They do not want to see anything succeeding or achieving its objectives. My advice is that you allow those bastards to come here and see for themselves." Simpson said this only a month after Saddam had executed a British journalist accused of being a spy.

THE EPISODE that may best symbolize the confused messages to Saddam was State's quashing of honest commentary by the United States Information Agency. On February 15, 1990, a Voice of America editorial, entitled "No More Secret Police," hailed popular revolts against "dictatorial rule," especially in Ceaucescu's Romania. It included the following (and only) reference to Iraq: "The secret police are still widely present in countries like China, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Cuba and Albania."

Saddam must have reacted furiously, because the response at State was to mollify him. "Our guess is that the President himself heard it on February 15," America's ambassador to Baghdad, April Glaspie, cabled to Washington. She had been called to see Iraq's deputy foreign minister, who protested a "flagrant interference in the internal affairs of Iraq," according to the cable, which was

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uncovered by *New York Times* columnist William Safire.

The U.S. responded with what Saddam could easily have read as a collective grovel. "It is absolutely not United States policy to question the legitimacy of the Government of Iraq nor to interfere in any way in the domestic concerns of the Iraqi people and government," Ambassador Glaspie wrote back to the foreign ministry. "My government regrets that the wording of the editorial left it open to incorrect interpretation." She added that the editorial could not have referred to Saddam, because "as assistant secretary Kelly told his Excellency the President on February 12, President Bush wants good relations with Iraq, relations built on confidence and trust. . . . "

Back in Washington, Kelly rebuked a VOA representative at a State Department staff meeting attended by Secretary Baker. Six weeks later, when Saddam complained to the five senators about the Western press, Dole replied: "There was one person who was not authorized to say anything about the government. He was a commentator for VOA. . . . That person was fired." The VOA writer had not been fired, though an embassy official told the senators he had been.

After Saddam's complaints, State asked to see all VOA editorials on Iraq before they were aired. So on July 25, one week before the Kuwait invasion, VOA submitted a draft editorial that would prove to be prophetic. It read: "As a U.S. Defense Department spokesman said this week, the U.S. remains strongly committed to supporting the individual and collective self-defense of its friends in the Persian Gulf. . . . The U.S. would take very seriously any threat that put U.S. interests or friends at risk." Kelly's bureau killed even that tepid warning to Saddam Hussein.

Nearly as telling is the way NSC staffers sought to tone down an April 30 speech by Vice President Dan Quayle to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. According to White House sources who saw it, the speech draft included a reference to Saddam's April 2 "threats." Comments on the draft from the NSC asked that this be changed to Saddam's "remarks." Another NSC comment: "Emphasis on Iraq misplaced given U.S. policy, other issues." The final draft included only a mild rebuke to Iraq for "reckless words and actions."

The mixed messages continued up to the August 2 invasion. In late May, Haass quietly visited Baghdad and had a sharp exchange with the foreign minister and his deputy. Haass "basically said, 'This relationship is up to you,' " according to a White House source. Haass said the administration is fighting off sanctions in Congress, " 'but you [the Iraqis] are giving us no ammunition.' "

Throughout this period, the Bush team was also resisting anti-Iraq sanctions gaining momentum in Congress. Douglas Waller has reported in the *New Republic* that Senator Dole put a legislative "hold" on one sanctions bill right up to the day of the invasion. Expressing the administration's view of sanctions attached to a farm bill, Indiana Republican Senator Richard Lugar said that, "Passage of this legislation would badly undercut any possibility we have of influencing Iraqi behavior in areas from the peace process to human rights, terrorism to proliferation."

THE MOST FAMOUS exchange is of course the July 25 meeting between Ambassador Glaspie and Saddam in Baghdad. (The transcript was leaked by the Iraqis, and its accuracy has not been challenged by State.) It can only be called amazing. Saddam threatened and blustered, all but declaring his intent to invade Kuwait. Ambassador Glaspie replied: "We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait. I was in the American Embassy in Kuwait during the late 1960s. The instruction we had during this period was that we should express no opinion on this issue and that the issue is not associated with America."

This conversation has been taken as the decisive, final signal to Saddam of U.S.

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weakness, and it may well have been. But it also wasn't far removed from the pattern of U.S. policy set during the previous years, and especially the previous five months. Glaspie may have been more fawning (U.S. officials say she had no specific instructions for the meeting since it was called on very short notice), but she was only one part of "the mindset."

Indeed, after Ambassador Glaspie's meeting, with Iraqi troops massed on the Kuwait border, a cable was sent to Saddam under President Bush's signature. According to the Middle East Policy Survey newsletter (which first reported the story) and to sources familiar with it, the cable gave a "firm" but general message opposing the use of force. It offered no specific security guarantees toward Kuwait, and it held out the hope of better relations. Still later, on July 31, John Kelly testified before Congress that "we have no defense treaty relationships with any of the [Gulf] countries. We have historically avoided taking a position on border disputes or on internal OPEC deliberations, but we have certainly, as have all administrations, resoundingly called for the peaceful settlement of disputes and differences in the area." The BBC World Service reported that Kelly had offered no security guarantee for Kuwait. April Glaspie clearly was not alone.

To the very end, U.S. officials expected that Saddam would not invade. By all accounts, the intelligence community well documented the Iraqi build-up near Kuwait, but missed Saddam's intentions until August 1. A lone (and so far anonymous) analyst did predict the invasion, according to several sources, but the intelligence "consensus" was far more hedged. "The theory was that everything he was doing was to coerce" Kuwait, says one ranking source. "He wanted the money, or maybe the two islands [in the Persian Gulf], but not Kuwait. So what was the problem?" One source recalls a meeting on July 31 with Secretary Cheney and senior Defense Department officials; the consensus was that he would not invade. Two days later Saddam's tanks rolled in.

In their own defense, administration officials point to the fact that Saddam's own Arab neighbors reinforced U.S. policy. And it is true that, again and again, Egyptian, Jordanian, Saudi, and even Kuwaiti officials urged the United States not to say or do anything that might provoke Saddam. Only a day before August 2, Jordan's King Hussein telephoned President Bush to assure him that no invasion was imminent. This Arab mindset, say U.S. officials, meant that a shift to containment would have required the U.S. to go it alone.

But this is impossible to know for sure since the U.S. never tried to persuade the Arabs to change course. And it is disturbing to think that U.S. officials rely so heavily on the judgment of Arab officials, whose interests are so clearly different from our own. It is, after all, mainly American men and women who are now defending Saudi Arabia. Israel, moreover, was signaling for months that the United States should shift its policy toward containment. Moshe Arens, the Israeli defense minister, made this plea in person to Secretary Cheney in a Washington visit on July 19–20. But U.S. officials gave greater weight to the Arab belief that no Arab leader would ever invade a brother nation.

Could a different policy have deterred Saddam? It is impossible to say. Administration officials are naturally defensive about their decisions, and Secretary Baker has gone so far as to denounce as "shameful" the "20–20 hindsighting going on."

Perhaps he is right, but in a democracy, hindsight can also go by the name of accountability. It is undeniable that U.S. policy failed to give even the most basic signal that might have deterred Saddam. The policy failed to understand the oldest truth of international relations: That bullies who threaten American interests cannot be appeased, they must be opposed.

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America and Israel

How Bad Is It? Will It Get Worse?

Steven L. Spiegel

EVEN BEFORE Iraq invaded Kuwait, there was a sense of growing crisis in the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Many Washington analysts were arguing that relations between the two countries would necessarily decline with the end of the Cold War. They claimed that without the Soviet threat, Americans would be less willing to become involved in areas like the Middle East and therefore less prepared to aid countries like Israel. These arguments intensified with the formation of a right-wing government in Jerusalem in June 1990.

On the surface, this position was understandable. The Jewish state and the Cold War came into existence at exactly the same historical moment, and ever since, they had been interrelated in American foreign policy. So if one was now ending, was that not likely to have a profound effect on how the United States viewed the other? But the same, of course, could be asked about America's relationship with countries like India and Pakistan, which also came into existence in the late 1940s, yet there was no speculation that the end of the Cold War was going to change our relations with them radically. Neither was Washington swept by serious questioning about future relations with such allies as Britain, France, Italy, and Australia. The apparent end of the Cold War was certainly leading to a reassessment of the American world role, but there was something strange about the assumption that this adjustment would lead to tensions and basic change only in the case of Israel.

Why then the strained relationship between Washington and Jerusalem in mid–1990? In part, America's capital had been affected by a smug complacency following the collapse of the Soviet world role. Academics and pundits assured us that economics had superseded force as the medium of international exchange. Conflict was outdated; despotism obliterated; history ended. But Israel's cold war was not over; daily hostilities continued with both the Palestinians and the Arab states. Israelis warned of Iraq's developing aggressiveness and constant build-up of conventional and nonconventional arms. Bush administration officials suspected they were simply looking for excuses to avoid confronting the Palestinian question. The reality of Israel's situation and the policies it was obliged to pursue were out of sync with increasingly prevailing views about interdependence, the obsolescence of armed conflict, and a more benign international system.

Then suddenly the Israelis were proved right, at least about Saddam and their region.

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Their view on the continued role of military force in world politics turned out to be far closer to reality than American pollyannaishness. Does that mean we can anticipate a return to the supposed good old days of amity between the two countries? Those who believe the answer to this question is positive do not understand either the political disadvantages of being prematurely right, or the historical, shifting relationship between the United States and Israel.

Two Philosophies

FROM THE origins of Zionist aspirations, two philosophies have competed in the American response to them: the idealistic and the *realpolitik*. Six years before the first Zionist Congress met in Basel, Switzerland in 1897, a Reverend Blackstone of Chicago gained the signatures of many of America's most prominent individuals, including the chief justice of the Supreme Court and the speaker of the House of Representatives. This "Blackstone Memorial" advocated a return of the Jews to Palestine. In response to a State Department query, the American consul in Jerusalem—concerned about alienating the Ottoman rulers of the area—responded, "Palestine is not ready for the Jews; the Jews are not ready for Palestine." The pattern was thus set nearly a hundred years ago: one of constant conflict between ideals and self-interest in the American approach to Zionism and, later, Israel.

For decades the two competing approaches moved in opposition to each other. After World War II, American policy-makers saw U.S. interests embodied in blocking the expansion of Soviet influence, protecting oil supplies, and promoting good relations with as many Arab states as possible. But they also felt saddled with the responsibility of securing Israel's survival, once it was established. Reconciling these interests, and keeping them in balance as circumstances have changed, has been the central preoccupation of American policy toward Israel.

Despite the myth of consistent amicability and unity of purpose between Washington and Jerusalem, the path of their relationship has been a crooked and rocky road indeed—filled with bitter misunderstandings and mutual recriminations. The relationship has involved a long dialectic, in which words of mutual praise and admiration have masked almost constant dispute caused by different perspectives on vital interests, the peace process, the location of Israel's borders, the content of a peace treaty between Arabs and Israelis, the appropriate behavior and the actual intentions of Arab states, and the level of arms sales and aid to both the Arab states and Israel.

The Israelis have often been seen by American policy-makers as ungrateful, self-righteous, even intransigent, while Israelis for their part have believed that their American counterparts lack a proper comprehension of the fragility of Israel's security and the depth of Arab opposition to its existence. Some American officials were convinced from the beginning that Israel was an albatross, limiting the promotion of U.S. interests in the area. Certainly the notion that Israel should be considered an asset, let alone an ally, was almost completely alien to early policy-makers, and it was the rare official, like Clark Clifford under Truman and Omar Bradley under Eisenhower, who suggested that Israel might well be useful to the United States in its conflict with the USSR. In the first decade and a half of Israel's existence, the view that the Cold War was an *impediment* to the flowering of U.S.-Israeli relations had much greater credibility than the opposite notion, which now has currency, that the friendship has always been dependent on the existence of the Soviet-American conflict, and is endangered by its ending.

Israel and the Presidents

DURING MOST of the last forty years, the belief that Israel's existence facilitated Soviet inroads in the Middle East encouraged American impatience. As early as 1946, Truman was bitterly frus-

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trated by the Zionist refusal to accept a British-sponsored plan for the cantonization of Palestine. "If Jesus Christ couldn't please them, how can I?" he complained to aides. Even though the United States recognized Israel eleven minutes after it came into existence in 1948, it also slapped an arms embargo on the country during its perilous early months. Truman threatened the Israelis with reprisals if they did not evacuate the Sinai, where their troops were advancing. Later the United States refused to accept Israel's declaration of Jerusalem as its capital in 1950, a refusal that continues to this day.

Under Eisenhower and Dulles the gap between American and Israeli perspectives was particularly acute. As early as 1953, Dulles wrote a secret memo to the president recommending that the administration keep its distance from the Middle East machinations of London, Paris, and Jerusalem. That approach would reach its apogee when the United States pressured the three countries to withdraw from Egypt during the Suez Crisis of 1956. Meanwhile, State Department officials urged Israel to withdraw from some territories gained in 1948, an assistant secretary of state publicly called upon Israel to suspend the "law of return," and the United States was deeply critical of Israel's retaliatory raids against terrorist bases. At the time, the policies of the Ben Gurion government were regarded with deep suspicion in Washington, while the regime in Baghdad, and at first even Nasser, were seen as more reliable.

Kennedy and Johnson changed American policy by beginning to speak about a special relationship between the two countries and slowly initiating a process of selling arms to Israel. But to the consternation of Jerusalem, Kennedy also tried to improve relations with Nasser and to initiate a controversial Palestinian refugee resettlement program.

Under Johnson, the Israeli prime minister was greeted for the first time at the White House in an official visit in 1964, sixteen years after the Jewish state had been established—hardly a sign of intimacy. The sympathetic Johnson did aid Israel, coaxing the Germans into selling it tanks so that the United States would not have to take political heat from the Arabs. The sale of offensive arms to Israel, in the form of Skyhawk jets, was later only initiated as a cover to expand arms sales to Arab states, particularly Jordan.

At the outset of the Six Day War, Johnson backed Israel, but Vietnam caused him to temporize. Even as Israel's future appeared to lie in the balance, the administration maneuvered to avoid direct action. Afterward, Washington reluctantly assumed responsibility for Israel's security, but only because the French had reneged on their close military cooperation with Jerusalem. Until then, the United States had greeted suggestions of any kind of collaboration with and assistance to Israel in security matters without enthusiasm. Under Johnson, the United States and Israel had differences over the progress of diplomacy, the meaning of UN Resolution 242, and Israel's decision to annex East Jerusalem.

THOUGH NIXON'S administration is often seen as the first to treat the Israelis as a strategic asset, using them to help thwart a radical Palestinian and Syrian attempt to take over Jordan in September 1970, U.S.-Israeli disputes escalated during his term. Often forgotten are the truly remarkable series of conflicts between the two governments which occurred throughout the period: Israeli skepticism and suspicion toward three plans presented by Secretary of State Rogers to move the peace process forward; U.S. hesitation to sell additional Phantom jets to Israel and to back the Meir government in the War of Attrition along the Suez Canal in 1969–70; a bitter dispute over Egyptian violations of the Suez Canal cease-fire in August 1970; American consternation with Israeli military conduct in the wake of the cease-fire of the Yom Kippur War and Israeli frustration at being prevented from achieving victory. Some of these conflicts may appear arcane and even trivial in retrospect. At the time, they seemed to threaten the destruction of the relationship.

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President Nixon believed that the 1967 war resulted in major gains for the Soviets since many Arab states had broken diplomatic relations with the United States for its supposed backing of Israel. He embarked on an ultimately successful campaign to reverse American losses. From the outset, his top aides were deeply divided (especially Kissinger and Rogers) over the specific tactics to be pursued, but they all agreed that Israeli concessions would be used as bait to improve relations with Arab states at the expense of the Soviets. It was generally assumed that failure to make progress in the peace process would work to Soviet advantage or would lead to another war, with the accompanying possibility of triggering a Soviet-American confrontation. Thus, fear of Soviet expansion acted in the early 1970s as a major brake on Israeli-American relations.

After the October 1973 war, Israel's reputation plummeted in Washington, and an erosion of relations between the two countries was widely predicted over the energy crisis, then at its height. Kissinger's successes in shuttle diplomacy were accompanied by constant rifts with Israeli officials, culminating in the 1975 reassessment of Mideast policy by the Ford administration. This was clearly aimed at warning Israel that it could not continue to oppose Kissinger's tactics and impede his cherished "momentum." For their part Israelis and their American supporters looked on in horror at the growing Arab clout resulting from the West's energy dependence, and the strengthening of economic and military ties between key Arab states and the West.

The Carter administration was initially less concerned than its predecessors about the Soviet threat in the area, but it was convinced that an Arab-Israeli settlement would resolve the energy problem. The administration therefore pursued Arab-Israeli peace efforts with a passion, producing the Camp David Accords and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty. These achievements were accompanied by constant conflicts with the Israelis over every aspect of the administration's Middle East policy, including policy toward the USSR, Syria, the Palestinians, the sale of advanced fighter jets to Saudi Arabia, settlements on the West Bank, Jerusalem, and a host of diplomatic tactics along the way.

Reagan's Synthesis

RONALD REAGAN'S Middle East policies will surely be remembered for their favoritism toward Israel. But it is well to remember that even this administration in its first two years repeatedly confronted the Jerusalem government over such issues as the sale of AWACS jets to Saudi Arabia, the Reagan plan, Lebanon, the bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor, and the Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights. The administration took such steps as suspending delivery of F–16s and the 1981 Strategic Cooperation Agreement.

In the arena of *realpolitik*, until late 1983, relations between Washington and Jerusalem evinced acute and consistent acrimony. Yet the two countries justifiably gained a reputation for convivial coordination because of the enormous power of shared values and the idealistic ingredient in their relations. Americans are not satisfied with European-style foreign policy based strictly on *realpolitik* and a narrow security definition of national interest. Rather, America's ideological origins, the frontier myth that distinguished unambiguously between right and wrong, the absorption of millions of immigrants who had rejected the old world's ways, and the strong populist influence exerted through Congress have combined to encourage leaders to justify international policies in strong philosophical terms. Americans traditionally feel more comfortable acting on the world's stage in service of a grand cause and in opposition to evil and aggression.

This emphasis on ideals fits the American approach to Israel perfectly, and even before the country was established Israelis benefitted enormously from it. The images of victims of the Holocaust turning tragedy into triumph, pioneers transforming swamps into orchards, a fledgling democracy overcoming

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Herculean economic and security odds, absorbing immigrants, withstanding terrorist assaults, winning repeated wars—these are the types of images and myths to which Americans respond. Indeed, as Presidents Johnson and Reagan stated explicitly, such successes as the Six Day War and the Entebbe rescue of hijacked passengers reminded Americans of their own early achievements as a young and aspiring nation.

America, which saw itself as the New Jerusalem, identified with the emergence of the Old. Far more than in Europe, American Christianity celebrated the geography of the Holy Land and the experience of the Old Testament. America's vibrant Jewish community was more politically active and more accepted socially than its counterparts had ever been in Europe. The country also lacked a tradition of colonialism and became active in the Middle East only after World War II. Therefore, only rare Americans (missionaries, oil men, diplomats) developed a special sympathy for the Arab cause. The popular culture (literature, the news media, movies—especially *Exodus*) reinforced favoritism for the Israeli David fighting the Arab Goliath. Israeli heroes—Ben Gurion, Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan—became American heroes.

Until the 1980s, this emotional attachment to Israel was usually at odds with Cold War *realpolitik*. Only after the fall of the Shah and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was Israel really taken seriously as a possible strategic asset. Indeed, the American military did not take a major interest in the Middle East until the Carter Doctrine addressed the "arc of crisis" that was perceived as developing in the region from Ethiopia to Pakistan, centered in the Persian Gulf. A peculiar coalition of Reagan Republicans and Henry Jackson Democrats, both predisposed to accept Israel's importance as an anti-Soviet instrument, existed after 1981. If they had not triumphed, it is likely that an alternative strategy concentrating on the Saudis, the Egyptians, the Jordanians, and perhaps the Iraqis, in a battle against Islamic fundamentalism, would have emerged.

Thus, it was Ronald Reagan and George Shultz who, for the first time, brought together the *realpolitik* and idealistic elements in the U.S. approach to Israel. No longer working at cross purposes, the two factors fused together to become a powerful force for advancing both strategic cooperation and the traditional connection based on values and ideals. Anticommunist conservatives, in particular, became more attached to Israel than ever. Potential conflicts between Israel and the United States over the *intifada*, the Pollard affair, differences over the peace process and American arms sales to Arabs, the Iran-*contra* affair, and Israel's relations with South Africa were contained and muted. In another period or with different American leaders, any one of these conflicts could have become a basis for serious acrimony. By sheer coincidence, the Arab world for the first time since World War II was focused elsewhere—on the consequences of the Iran-Iraq War—which further reduced pressures on the United States. This period is likely to be seen for a long time as the golden summer in U.S.-Israeli relations.

The Impact of the Gulf Crisis

WE ARE NOW in a new era. The Reagan administration, the Iran-Iraq war, and the Cold War all ended at about the same time. Calculations about the future of U.S.-Israeli relations and the proper balance between ideals and self-interest are being made in a new context, by new leaders. The perceptions about both ideals and interests have changed, yielding many novel elements, yet the traditional strains between them remain. In part, what we are witnessing is not major innovation but a return to the normal ebb and flow in U.S.-Israeli relations prevailing before 1983. In that respect, only the causes of tensions have changed.

Many American responsibilities assumed in Europe and Asia during the containment years will now be scaled back or terminated. Yet, as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait dramatically demonstrates, the Middle East will

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continue as the most unstable region in the world (with the adjoining Soviet Union as perhaps its most likely rival for that title). Israel will therefore be close to the center of America's most sensitive security concerns. The Cold War, which in the past sometimes facilitated and sometimes interfered with the two countries' cooperation, will no longer be a factor.

American fear of alienating Arabs by being too close to Israel will, however, remain. The manner in which the Iraqi crisis unfolded exacerbates this tension in the American approach to the Middle East. On the one hand, the unprecedented Saudi willingness to accept American assistance and troops proves that close relations between the United States and Israel will not be a decisive impediment when Arab regimes believe their survival is at stake. On the other hand, even though Israel is militarily the most powerful state in the region and the most dedicated opponent of Saddam Hussein, Washington has felt it necessary to keep Israel at arm's length since the crisis began. As the aftermath of the incident on the Temple Mount indicates, an arm's length can quickly become very wide indeed. The Israelis feel considerable discomfort as they contemplate both the fact that in Washington's eyes they are an unusable asset and the obligations that the United States is accumulating toward Arab states that are being cooperative in the crisis.

The Arab states were initially panicked by the end of the Cold War and the end of Soviet bloc support. No longer able to play the two superpowers against each other, they feared the reinforcement of Israel's military superiority. Instead, the Iraqi crisis has given America's Arab friends a new bargaining chip with Washington, one to replace the fear of expanded Soviet influence. Now they can argue persuasively both that they responded well to America's lead in the crisis and that the United States must support them lest they either collapse or be overwhelmed. This new peril is even more powerful than the old Soviet threat as a cause of American concern. The Soviets never made it to the Gulf, but the Iraqis have dramatically confirmed U.S. policy-makers' worst nightmares. Thanks to Saddam Hussein, the possibility of invasions, disrupted oil supplies, attacks on installations, increased prices, radical or fundamentalist coups, and revolts against pro-American producers, especially Saudi Arabia, seem only too real.

Once Americans become involved in protecting Arab regimes with troops and treasure, the investment and the engagement creates a new attachment to the Arab cause, a fear of troubling Arab partners by reinforcing ties to Israel, and a new susceptibility to Arab pressures to settle the Palestinian problem. Thus, any gains Israel initially made by being right about Iraq are dissipated, even though PLO Chief Yassar Arafat backed Saddam Hussein and Israeli security arguments against returning the West Bank are strengthened by Baghdad's invasion and the ambiguous role played by Jordan in the crisis. The end of the Cold War and the start of the Iraqi crisis bring American policy-makers back to making uneasy calculations between Arabs and Israelis—much as they did before Reagan and Shultz tilted firmly toward Israel.

More than Oil

THE IRAQI crisis has demonstrated that the Middle East will be of critical importance in the post-Cold War era. There are reasons beyond the threat to the oil fields that will ensure this.

First, the Middle East will continue to be a place where the most advanced non-nuclear weapons are deployed and at times employed. Chemical weapons, long-range ballistic missiles, and the most advanced jets and tanks have already been introduced into the region. Nuclear weapons may soon be added. In particular, Iraq's willingness to invade Kuwait, to use chemical weapons against Iranians and its own Kurdish population, and the threatening speeches of its president, Saddam Hussein, promise that the region will continue to be a center of violence and danger. If Saddam is able to continue to

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escalate the regional arms balance, his successes will encourage other countries in other regions to do likewise.

Second, the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, the collapse of Soviet authority throughout its empire, and the prevalence of weak regimes from the region to South Asia will be sources of instability and international conflicts regardless of Iraq's future role in the region. The Soviet Union and the Indian subcontinent may well disintegrate into a series of newly independent states, from Georgia in the west to Kashmir in the east, adding fifty million Muslims and other peoples to the Middle East. In particular, if Armenia and Azerbaijan become independent, the conflict between them will have considerable ramifications for the Middle East, especially for Iran and Turkey. While the most acute hostilities may transpire in areas to the east, American planners are likely to seek out facilities and arrangements to deal with possible future crises, and to coordinate intelligence gathering with friendly countries in the Arab-Israeli arena.

Third, the United States is going to require a back-up area in the wake of the negotiated withdrawal of the bulk of its troops from the European theater. The loss of NATO bases, because of agreements with the Soviets or domestic opposition in particular countries, will add to this pressure. The southern Mediterranean littoral will thereby become critical as a contingency area in case of a reversal of Soviet policy, a deterioration in the evolution of a democratic united Germany, or a crisis in Eastern Europe.

Fourth, post-Cold War administrations will have to decide whether to continue and expand strategic cooperation with Israel. Often misunderstood as aimed primarily against the USSR, strategic cooperation has also had both regional and global implications. Collaboration in intelligence, anti-terrorism, and now anti-drug efforts; the utilization of Israeli port facilities at Haifa; the refinement and exercising of desert fighting skills; maintenance of American equipment, prepositioning of materiel, and upgrading of older equipment; joint Mediterranean exercises; food, R & R, and medical services for U.S. troops stationed in the area; and research and development on the most advanced conventional weapons—all this will likely continue. Cooperation on advanced conventional weapons will be particularly important if missile and chemical proliferation are to be countered effectively. In an era of reduced American defense budgets, Israeli high tech innovations achieved on tight economies will be increasingly attractive.

Close collaboration with Arab states in opposition to Saddam Hussein causes many American officials to be fearful of high-profile cooperation with Jerusalem. After the Cold War, however, the United States and Israel have the same regional adversary: radically anti-Western Arab states. In earlier days, the United States was preoccupied with the USSR, Israel with the Arabs. That difference no longer exists.

Finally, Israel is a democratic model for many of the governments in Eastern Europe and the Third World struggling to break loose from the shackles of communism and authoritarianism. This new attractiveness is confirmed by the country's sudden popularity in several Eastern European countries. A serious break between Washington and Jerusalem now would be strange indeed, running counter to the American commitment, implicit if not explicit after the Cold War ideological triumph, to support the evolution of democratic governments wherever they exist or may arise.

The Enduring Strategic Case

IN THE POST-Cold War era, American leaders will be confronted with a series of conflicting issues, some of which will pull them toward the Israelis, some toward the Arabs.

Driven by a concern to contain Islamic militancy and Arab radicalism, to prop up moderate Arab regimes, and to protect oil supplies, American officials may be inclined to lose sight of or greatly downplay the

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security role Israel plays in support of American interests in the region. To a degree, one sees this in the administration's rather ostentatious effort to keep Israel "on the side lines" during the Iraq crisis.

Yet, at the same time, there are many reports (including those based on remarks made by General Dugan, until recently Air Force chief of staff) that indicate continued military and intelligence cooperation between the United States and Israel. While the Bush administration's public rhetoric is somewhat different from its immediate predecessor, the underlying reality remains the same: pro-American Arab regimes will accept strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel as long as it is conducted discreetly, and especially if it enhances America's ability to protect Arab vital concerns.

Moreover, whatever talk there is about creating Arab-based regional security structures will founder on the character of the "allied" regimes in the area. Substituting reliance on one despot (Hafez Assad) for another (Saddam Hussein) will prove equally disappointing. Nor will placing major weight on fragile Gulf regimes, including Saudi Arabia, over the long run enhance U.S. security interests in the area. Massive arms transfers to Arab sheikdoms cannot assure their stability whatever temporary victories are achieved against Iraq. The United States will not be able to count on this alliance of convenience for more than the present moment. This is not Western Europe, and attempts to build more permanent regional security structures with these regimes are doomed to fail. We have witnessed two such unsuccessful attempts in the past. One included Israel (Haig's "strategic consensus" approach which sought to work with both Israel and the Arab states against the Soviet Union). One did not (Dulles's 1955 Baghdad Pact which brought together the "Northern tier" Islamic states to resist possible Soviet aggression). Far from contributing toward stability, such attempts will exacerbate already existing instabilities: witness the collapse of the Shah in Iran.

While the Bush administration has kept its distance from Israel in responding to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the fact remains that Israel is the only power in the region stable enough to be counted on in the long run. In short, *realpolitik* provides at least as strong an incentive for close Israeli-American relations now as it did in the 1980s, even as the precise set of interests has been altered with the end of the Cold War. Now, and in the future, Israel will be seen by Washington as a useful ally on a wide range of global and regional problems. Strategic cooperation will continue because of practical requirements and shared interests in dealing with an increasingly unstable and unpredictable national security environment.

Confusion and Estrangement

THE IDEOLOGICAL dimension of the relationship, however, has changed markedly. Many Americans no longer see Israelis in mythic terms, as living versions of biblical miracle workers achieving the impossible. Instead, the deep and bitter ideological divisions in the country, the rigid bureaucracy, and the seeming incompetence of many of its leaders have frustrated even many of Israel's supporters. The influx of Soviet Jews is an act of high drama, a confirmation of the Zionist objective and the wisdom of past American assistance. Under ordinary circumstances Americans would be rallying to Israel's support at this moment and many are—especially in the Jewish community. But it is symptomatic of problems in the relationship that the exodus of Soviet Jews soon became a cause of new controversies—over the minor issue of the entry of a minuscule number of Soviet Jews into the West Bank, and over the seeming inability of the Israeli government to adopt an effective plan for absorbing them.

These concerns are part of a broader and deeper problem: the chaos into which Israel's internal political life has descended. Many of Israel's closest friends are repulsed by the obdurate, uncompromising, dogmatic treatment by Israelis of each other. The unseemly

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squabbling and back-biting is too frequently reflected in domestic turmoil and the spectacle of Israeli politicians, academics, and journalists attacking each other on visits to Europe and North America. This constant bickering gives Israel's supporters an opportunity to pick and choose among differing Israeli opinions. Sometimes the vehemence of the debate inclines them to reject all sides.

At the same time, the United States suffers from its own uncertainties regarding the future. The collapse of Soviet power has clearly enhanced American security, but there is confusion and disagreement as to where the world is heading and what America's role in it will and should be. Contemplating the economic strength of Japan and Germany, the sluggish growth and deficits of their own economy, and the social problems confronting the country, many Americans see nothing but decline—even as others see the United States as the only authentic superpower in a world in which democracy is triumphant.

Styles and Personalities

IN ITS OWN state of uncertainty, each country finds the confusion of the other unsettling and disturbing. These feelings are intensified by the radical differences between the two administrations currently in power. Prime Minister Shamir presides over the most right-wing government in Israel's history—one committed to the realization of nationalist goals and ideological aspirations. The Bush administration by contrast prides itself on its pragmatism, its ability to make deals, its strong reliance on short-term tactics for addressing immediate problems.

This pragmatic perspective was reflected in the Bush administration's response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The president masterfully set about assembling an astonishing coalition behind his intervention in Saudi Arabia. That, together with the unprecedentedly rapid military build-up, represented superb management skills. Yet at the same time the president seemed unable to place American actions in a clear and consistent conceptual framework, providing instead a series of ad hoc justifications, inadequately articulated in uninspiring language.

This conceptual confusion was inherent in a pragmatic administration's confrontation with the Middle East, a region not characterized by devotion to pragmatism. Saddam Hussein's attack on his neighbor did not emerge from the kind of cautious calculations distinctive of the Bush style. Until he invaded Kuwait, most high-ranking officials in Washington who thought about the matter at all assumed that he was—like them—someone with whom business arrangements were possible. In turn, this confidence nurtured in Hussein the mistaken expectation of meager opposition to the invasion. The administration had responded meekly to his threats against Israel, to his use of chemical weapons, to his bellicose stand in OPEC, to his development of long-range missiles, and to the reports of nuclear weapons development. The invasion was only an extension of past behavior.

Certainly, before the takeover of Kuwait, many high officials had demonstrated greater consternation concerning democratic Israel than despotic Iraq. To pragmatic dealmakers, ideological behavior of any kind, even that inspired by adherence to democratic principles, is off-putting. Saddam Hussein only alienated George Bush when he began to act like a dangerous nationalist instead of a Machiavellian maneuverer.

The Palestinian question is another Mideast issue on which the business-like approach of the administration has been stymied by the emotional politics of the region. Neither the Israelis, nor the Palestinians, nor the Arabs have had sufficient unity of purpose, commitment to a particular course, or trust in their adversaries to adopt in full the recommendations of the Bush administration. All sides are noted for their tenacious focus on their own preferred solutions. In Eastern Europe, the Bush administration has needed only to react to events. In dealing with the Palestinian question it has been

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expected to generate new ideas and win over a host of mutually suspicious and skeptical parties—an inherently more daunting task.

The response of the Bush team has been to pursue a step-by-step method reminiscent of the approach employed by Henry Kissinger. This is not surprising because many of its major players—Snowcroft, Cheney, Baker, and Bush himself—were also figures (some key) in the U.S. government in that period, especially in the Ford presidency. Similar to the reigning beliefs in the mid–1970s, this administration believes that progress in the peace process will facilitate the achievement of American objectives, even if the Soviet threat has basically disappeared. As a group, the business-like and pragmatic Bush team has no value-laden predisposition, no sentimental attachments, no special affinity for or affiliation with either side in the conflict.

Even before the Iraqis created fear and panic in the Gulf, the Bush administration's commitment to moving the peace process forward was demonstrated by the dialogue with the PLO, support for the Shamir plan, emphasis on the segment of that plan dealing with Palestinian elections, support for Cairo's Ten Points and the proposal of a Baker Five Points designed to promote the process, and criticism of Israel for settling any Soviet Jews in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. At times, these tactics worked brilliantly, as when the administration took Shamir's own plan and promoted it as the basis of American policy. On other occasions, tactics nearly worked (e.g., Israeli, Palestinian, Egyptian, and American delegations were almost brought together in Cairo in early 1990). At other points, they were disastrous, as when Bush's interjection of the Jerusalem issue into the discourse about Soviet Jews helped to bring down the Israeli national unity government in early 1990. In a fashion typical of an administration preoccupied with tactics, it sometimes seemed that the president was more exercised over Israeli settlements in the West Bank than over Chinese behavior in Tiananmen Square, or Soviet policies toward Lithuania, or—before August 1990—Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons policies.

The problem with the tactical-pragmatic methods of this administration before the Iraqi invasion is that they triggered Arab and Israeli responses which inhibited progress. Both sides tried to maneuver so that they would not be blamed by the media or leading Washington officials for any failures or breakdowns. Extremists were strengthened everywhere, precisely because the step-by-step approach conducted by the administration had the effect of raising fears of final outcomes. It is therefore not surprising that after eighteen months the administration found itself confronting a right-wing government in Israel and the need to break off talks with the PLO because Arafat would not condemn a terrorist raid against Israel.

Bush and Baker's task is inherently far more difficult than Kissinger's because they are dealing with the most emotional and vexing issue of the conflict, the Palestinian question. Most Arabs have assumed that the purpose of the process is to rob them of a Palestinian state; on the other hand, many Israelis are certain the objective of Baker's efforts is to create just such a sovereign entity. Reassurances to either side exacerbate the other's fears. Instead of the achievable Egyptian-Israeli compromise of the 1970s (the Sinai in return for normalization of relations), in this case each proposed solution is another side's anathema, and the tactical pragmatism pursued by Bush and Baker risks appearing insensitive to the fears and insecurities of both sides. While this represents a kind of impartiality, it is the wrong kind. Kissinger's genius was to convince both parties he was their partisan; Baker's failure may be his tendency to convince both parties he is their opponent. The Middle East is not a business and does not easily lend itself to Texas-style wheeling and dealing by long distance telephone. After two years in office, the secretary of state has still to visit Israel (in fact, he has never been there). Indeed, the administration's insistence on raising repeatedly the Jerusalem question—the most passionate and

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difficult of all in the Arab-Israeli conflict—reflects an insensitivity to the emotional dimension in human affairs within America's current leadership.

A New Type of Crisis

THE RELATIONSHIP has also always been deeply affected by the kind of personal rapport established between the two countries' leaders. It is no secret that Bush and Shamir do not trust each other. Rumors emanating from their respective camps suggest that Bush believes Shamir has not always told him the complete truth, while Shamir consoles himself that Bush is an "Arabist." In the early days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Shamir was the only major leader in the region whom Bush did not phone personally—except, of course, for Saddam Hussein, Muammar Qaddafi, Yassar Arafat, and Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Yet, the U.S.-Israeli relationship has long withstood personal conflicts. Carter told his wife at Camp David that he thought Begin was a "psycho." The amiable Reagan commented in frustration at one point, "That fellow [Begin] sure makes it hard to like him." Neither Ford nor Carter found Begin's predecessor, Yitzhak Rabin, easy to handle. In each instance, compatible relations between Jerusalem and Washington survived, and if the failure of Bush and Shamir to hit it off stood alone, there would be little to worry about.

Moreover, as with any alliance, there will be better and worse times. In the 1960s, Americans found aspects of French policy repulsive enough that boycotts of French goods were organized. Today, there is deep resentment over Japanese trade policy. Tomorrow, there will no doubt be tensions with a unified and newly assertive Germany. The fact is, allies—even democratic allies, even close allies, even allies with relations that span several decades—do on occasion endure such periods of tension.

However, in the current U.S.-Israel contretemps, there is a combination of factors that is unique. First, and to emphasize it again, the gap between American pragmatism and Israeli nationalism has never been greater. Therefore the degree of tension that Israel has created by refusing to respond to the administration's peace efforts could well be unprecedented.

Second, the prime impact of the end of the Cold War as it affects U.S.-Israeli relations has been to rob Americans of a missionary focus. As Israel was a beneficiary of this characteristic of American policy in the past, it may now suffer from a shrinking in the scope of American thinking and the absence of an ideological compass. If a desperate attempt to avoid economic decline becomes the central preoccupation of American global policy, there will simply be less room for the Israelis.

Third, Israel's quiet assent to remaining in the background during the early days of U.S. intervention in Saudi Arabia helped to alleviate tensions temporarily. Yet, the decision to remain on the periphery is not entirely theirs to control, as the recent tragic events at the Temple Mount and Western Wall have made clear. It is almost inevitable that the Gulf crisis will have a direct and negative impact on U.S.-Israeli relations, because it intensifies American fears of alienating the Arab regimes and the Arab masses. This mindset does not lead to compatibility of perspectives between Washington and Jerusalem on issues ranging from the Palestinian question to arms sales to Arab states.

Fourth, and most important, Israel's reputation in the United States has been declining for many years, its image changing in serious ways. From a country that in 1967 could seemingly do no wrong, it sometimes seems it can now do no right in American eyes. The specific reasons are familiar and have already been referred to above: the Lebanon war in 1982; the Pollard affair; the relationship with South Africa; the *intifada* and the accompanying devastating press and media coverage; the prolonged political and economic crises.

Now that the United States has for the first time stationed troops in large numbers

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on the territory of one of Israel's enemies, the temptation to prove that these forces have a peacekeeping payoff will grow. Bush may have intended no direct line between the crisis in the Gulf and the Palestinian question in his October speech at the UN, but the link was made nevertheless: solving the former would free the United States to work on the latter. In short, the pressure to prove that the American intervention has positive implications for settling the Arab-Israeli dispute will also grow, as strains develop in the Arab coalition arrayed against Saddam Hussein and as restlessness rises among Arab masses. Given the sensitivity of the Bush administration to the concerns and fears of Arab regimes, the American intervention to stop Saddam Hussein encourages eventual pressure on Israel for concessions on the Palestinian issue, in order to prove to Arab partners the value of U.S. actions.

When this pressure comes, it will be exerted against a background of American domestic uncertainty about Israel. Many Jews are worried anew about Israel's survival in the wake of Saddam Hussein's threats, but some are also concerned that Israel could somehow be blamed if the results of the Persian Gulf crisis are not completely successful. Yet, in the wake of accumulated frustrations, many who still care deeply about the country now ask whether they should become less, rather than more, involved in Israel's affairs while others want to barge in and "save Israel in spite of itself" on the assumption that Israel is too important to be left to the Israelis. George Bush and James Baker are not the only skeptics. Many Americans, including many supporters of Israel, no longer have confidence in the perspicacity and ingenuity of Israel's leaders, or in the working of the Israeli political system.

In Israel there is a tendency to take the close ideological bonds between the two countries for granted. Many Israelis seem oblivious to the corrosive impact of well-advertised internal squabbles and domestic back-biting on their image for efficiency and democracy. They seem not to understand the importance of taking positive steps toward alleviating the Palestinian question, the devastating effect of appearing to oppose negotiations, and the heavy moral burden imposed by even the suspicion that the Palestinians are being oppressed. If Israel proves unable to absorb Soviet Jews effectively—and if the failures are judged to be caused by incompetence, mismanagement, or political and bureaucratic infighting—disillusionment with Israel will grow in the United States. The intangible ideological ties which bind the two countries together will be harmed further.

Thus, we have reached a new type of crisis in U.S.-Israeli relations. For the first time, the realm of ideals and values are in question rather than the area of self-interest. Doubts rooted in *realpolitik* were repeatedly overcome between 1948 and 1983 because of the almost mythical quality of Israel's popularity. The Israelis could overcome tensions based in skepticism about the concrete advantages of close ties to them because of the forcefulness of the faith of many Americans in the rightness of their cause and the power of the two countries' common ideals. But it is unlikely that it would work the other way—that self-interest alone would be strong enough to compensate for ideological disillusionment. If those ties and that faith should be lost because of changes on either or both sides, the bond which has kept the two countries together will be greatly, perhaps irreparably, damaged and the relationship will be limited to what shared interests alone can sustain.

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Steadily Accumulating Madness

Leon Wieseltier

LINKAGE IS not only a device of diplomats, it is also a matter of fate. In Washington, the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel may or may not be "linked" to the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, and the new American "link" with Saudi Arabia may or may not alter the old American "link" with Israel; but out there, in the Middle East, in the thickening tangle of visions and wounds, there is linkage. One is forever linked to anyone who has the power to destroy one, and who thinks he has a reason why.

If the internecine warfare in the Islamic world persists, and if the Israelis and the Palestinians continue to prefer the immediate gratifications of maximalism to the measured risks of a political solution, then the American president and the American secretary of state will find themselves helpless before a regional history. This is not to say that American policy will have no impact on the outcome of the various vicious conflicts; a "tilt" one way or the other, will encourage or discourage one party or the other, and the proliferation of advanced American weaponry will tempt use as much as it deters it. (Now that the Soviet Union has declared bankruptcy, the United States will be increasingly responsible for the quality and the quantity of forces in the Middle East, and one day we may find ourselves in the charmless position of fighting a proxy war with ourselves.) The important fact is that we do not have the power to erase the memories or the desires of other states and other cultures. For a variety of waxing and waning moral, strategic, and economic reasons, the United States must continue to involve itself in the region; but the region will go to hell anyway, if its peoples decide that hell is the lesser evil.

As I write, the details of the Iraqi depredations in Kuwait have been brought to light, the Israeli police have massacred Palestinians who stoned Jews at the Western Wall, Saddam Hussein has boasted about his ability to deliver chemical weapons to Israel, and the United States has assembled a huge force in the desert and seems foggy about why. The region is a spectacle of steadily accumulating madness. The reassurance is gone, in short, from the usual pin-striped talk about muddling through. If muddling through means endless civil strife, stabbings and bombings and shootings, constant military adventure, revivals of tribal and religious wars, political chaos in the democracies (or rather, the democracy) and political repression everywhere else—if it means the collapse of the conditions for a life characterized by anything other than struggle—then muddling through is a mean achievement.

In the Middle East, the distinction between realism and pessimism is, I fear, disappearing. The Arab world seems to have promoted fever into an ideal. One observes the magnitude of the savagery between Arab and Arab, one studies the modern consequences of ancient allegiances, and one rubs one's eyes at the Arab critics of "modernization" and "secularization." Is the Arab world really suffering from a surfeit of modern, secular rationality? Is it really threatened most by the loss of its roots? The argument one hears is that modern, secular rationality means assimilation, transgression, an erasure of identity, because it is Western—that is, imperial, colonial. This is either an excuse or a concession. It is an excuse because the empire is long gone. The atrocities in Kuwait City or Beirut or Hama were post-colonial events, accomplishments of post-colonial men. And it is a concession because reason—

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the spirit of detachment in the observation of one's own self and society, the respect for a different way of looking at things, the interest in conversation and compromise, the dissociation of coercion and cruelty from the search for truth—is not Western, or Eastern, but human. Surely the universalism that gained on the feudal, patriarchal, theocratic, bloodthirsty parts of Christian life can gain on the feudal, patriarchal, theocratic, bloodthirsty parts of Muslim life. It was not an easy fight in the Christian world, either; there, too, democracy was a brutal intellectual intrusion accompanied by a bewildering economic order that put an unprecedented pressure on tradition. Democracy is Western historically, not essentially. To think otherwise is to misunderstand it completely. Anyway, is the provenance of democracy really more significant than the consequences of its absence?

The resolution of conflict in the Middle East cannot wait, of course, upon the advent of democracy in the Arab world. As the Algerian election showed, the likely consequence of democratic means in Arab society will be the legitimation of undemocratic ends. My point is rather that American policy toward the Arab world has no foundation in American principle. It will be based, for as far as the eye can see, not on ideas, but on interests. Those interests are strategic and economic. The economic interest is oil (though the scale of the industrialized world's dependence on oil makes this economic interest also a larger affair of "world order"). The strategic interest is less simple.

Steven Spiegel is correct when he writes that America's motives for engagement with the Arab world have not been made moot by the end of the Cold War. In fact, American policy in the Middle East still has not solved its post–1978 problem. Before the fall of the Shah, the United States had two pillars for its policy, Israel and Iran. That is, before the fall of the Shah, the Arab-Israeli conflict did not interfere too much with the pursuit of American interests in the region, because the United States enjoyed an alliance with a Middle Eastern power that was Muslim but not Arab. When the Shah fell, however, the United States began a necessary and exasperating search in the region, that is in the Arab world, for a new partner. The relationship of its new partner to Israel could not resemble the relationship of its old partner to Israel. Suddenly American policy was structurally divided against itself. The Arab-Israeli conflict began to appear as a disruption in the very heart of American strategy, as Alexander Haig learned from the failure of his "strategic consensus."

THE AMERICAN response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait amounts to a de facto implementation of Haig's plan. The difference is that Bush and Baker seem to have no intention of allowing the American relationship with Israel to disturb the American relationship with Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other Arab states. Baker, certainly, has more than a course correction in mind; he has even warned Shamir that Israel is looking a little like Iraq for its refusal to welcome an investigation of the Temple Mount incident. (The refusal was, like Baker's animadversion, stupid.) The confrontation in the Gulf, in other words, may represent the coming to pass of one of Israel's worst strategic nightmares. Bush is saying that America is prepared to stay in the Gulf "for years," and Baker is speculating about a formal, long-term, extravagant alliance with the Gulf sheikdoms. The administration is so unwilling to use American force, or so unwilling to lose the 1992 election, that it prefers to link America's fortunes to the most fragile and least legitimate regimes in the region.

In fairness, the Middle Eastern predicament of this administration, of any administration, is a little hopeless. To ignore the Arab states would be to betray American interests, but there are no Arab states that can secure American interests. For strategic and economic reasons, America must cultivate a relationship with the most anti-American political culture in the world. Supporters of

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Israel in this country have never quite accepted all of this sticky reality, never quite grasped the fact that the United States has always refused, and rightly, to let Israel be its sole representative in the region. Many of their criticisms of American policy, therefore, have been beside the point. Spiegel's warning against a sentimentalized view of American policy in the Middle East, his sober reminder that "only after the fall of the Shah and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was Israel really taken seriously as a possible strategic asset," is well taken.

The flaw of the Bush-Baker policy was not its turn toward a closer political and military relationship with Arab states; there was no other way to take action against Saddam Hussein without turning almost all of the region (and much of the rest of the world) into supporters of Iraq. (If American troops linger endlessly in the desert, though, that may still be the result.) The flaw of the policy was, rather, the scale of the administration's ambitions for this relationship, its confidence that a coalition formed in a crisis could be transformed into a durable and dependable arrangement.

Low expectations are one of the necessary conditions for a successful American policy toward the Arab world, though low expectations may require, somewhat paradoxically, decisive action. I am not referring to military action (though sometimes it may be justified), and certainly not to the Kissingerian fiction of a surgical strike. My point, more generally, is that one of the objectives of the Arab policy of the United States must be to find political action that does not provoke cultural reaction. In some instances, this may be impossible, and the United States will have to live with policies that come with high costs. But the absence of a moral basis for American policy toward the Arab states confers at least this advantage: it increases our flexibility. The Arab world is a buffeted world, and when you sail into winds, you learn to tack.

The absence of a moral basis means only that we cannot pretend that our involvements in the Arab world are in defense of democracy. It does not mean that there are no moral limits to the prosecution of our interests. We have to deal with authoritarian regimes, but we do not have to deal with genocidal ones. The appeasement of Saddam Hussein by George Bush (Bush has been rightly praised for the alacrity of his response to the invasion of Kuwait, but it was the alacrity of a convert) was not justified by our economic or strategic needs. About the willingness of Hussein to use chemical and biological weapons, about his indifference to the deaths of thousands and thousands in the pursuit of his aims, about the *sacro egoismo* that drives his expansionism, there is no need to speculate. The old Bush policy was not a failure of imagination, it was a failure of memory. And the new Bush policy, and the confrontation in the Gulf, and the war that will probably be fought there, is not really about Kuwait, though Kuwait's fate deserves to be reversed, or about oil, though its flow and its price are vital interests of the West. It is about the containment of an international emergency, one that will exist for as long as weapons of mass destruction remain in the hands of this mass destroyer. Democracy is not the only principle by which diplomats should be morally moved. Chemical weapons also violate human rights.

IN THE CASE of Israel, by contrast, American policy has had a moral and a strategic foundation. In truth, Israel's moral claim upon American support was always stronger than its strategic claim. (The opposite view, which protests that America needs Israel as much as Israel needs America and prefers not to dwell on morality, is Sharonism.) The limitations of the strategic argument are these: the use of Israeli force in the Arab world for the sake of an American interest would worsen almost every situation it was supposed to improve; the anti-Soviet utility of an alliance with Israel has receded into the mists of recent time; and one of the significant consequences of the Gulf crisis may be the emergence of Turkey as a significant strategic asset in American eyes. (The

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isolation of Iraq began in earnest when Turkey valiantly shut down its pipeline.) Spiegel is certainly correct that "the United States is going to require a back-up area in the wake of a negotiated withdrawal of the bulk of its troops from the European theater," but it is unlikely that the United States will want to spend $4 billion a year on a back-up area.

The problem for Israel is that while its moral claim may be stronger than its strategic claim, its moral claim is not as strong as it used to be. Israel is the only democracy in its vicinity, but it is a democracy with a stain. The stain might be deemed less important, in the United States at least, if the argument from Israeli democracy was also deemed less important. But Israel's advocates are trapped in one of the occupation's many pitfalls: they cannot praise the light without exposing the darkness. And so "for the first time," as Spiegel writes, "the realm of ideas and values are in question rather than the area of self-interest." The Palestinians, as he recognizes, are the reason. Yes, other peoples in the world are treated more unjustly by other states in the world; and yes, the Palestinians themselves have not exactly rushed toward reconciliation and territorial compromise; and yes, the Arab states make cynical use of the Palestinian question; and yes, the Palestinian question is hardly the cause of all the commotion in the region; and yes, the United States is selective in its expression of outrage—but no, none of this is reason enough to look away from the consequences of Israel's abiding occupation, and sordid repression, of the Palestinians. Anybody who gives Israel cause for complacence, who counsels Israel to hang tough and watch the Palestinian problem go away, is no friend of Israel.

Israel's policy toward the Palestinians cannot be determined, of course, by America's policy toward Israel. Israel will cut the territories loose for its own reasons, or not at all. The United States cannot force Israel to settle with the Palestinians, $4 billion notwithstanding. Still, it should interest Israel that its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza seems less and less defensible in the United States, as does the $4 billion. This is not merely a problem of "image." The occupation *is* less and less defensible. And the American pressures on the American support for Israel cannot be lightly dismissed, particularly if the United States fights a war abroad and a recession at home.

Obviously there is little likelihood of Israel finding a Palestinian interlocutor now. The PLO has disgraced itself with its celebration of an occupation, and it has given the Likud and its many fellow travelers in Labour a great gift. But many of the people who go about arguing correctly that there is no chance for peace today are the same people who went about arguing incorrectly that there was no chance for peace yesterday. Are the *intifada* (don't be fooled, it can catch fire any day), the destabilization of Jordan, the re-radicalization of Arab politics, the prestige of Saddam Hussein in the region, the attrition of support in the United States, the growing disillusionment of the American Jewish community—are all these (and they are only the external costs of the occupation) really less of a risk than the risk of a discussion with the PLO? And all the while Jerusalem is turning into Belfast. Perhaps I am too gloomy. Perhaps things will work out. Whatever happens, the hard-liners in Israel and in the American Jewish community had better not complain: Israel tried it their way.

I expect the detachment of the United States from Israel to grow, and I expect it to become harder and harder to fight. I do not expect the United States to abandon Israel, but Israel will reel from something much less than abandonment; it will reel merely from an end of the "special relationship." I expect Israeli life and Palestinian life to be more and more embittered by each other. I pray that I am wrong.

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A Return to the Norm

Robert W. Tucker

STATES MAY not be quite the "cold monsters" de Gaulle insisted they are, but they are normally not given to the kind of intimate relationship entertained by the United States and Israel during much of the 1980s. Steven Spiegel attributes the closeness of the relationship in these years largely to Ronald Reagan and George Shultz. Supported by a coalition of Reagan Republicans and Henry Jackson Democrats, Spiegel writes, Reagan and Shultz brought together as never before the two vital factors comprising the relationship: interests and ideals. For a brief period, considerations of *realpolitik* presumably did not operate at cross purposes with idealistic considerations. Instead, for the first time, shared values and emotional attachments clearly triumphed over considerations of self-interest.

The record suggests a somewhat different interpretation of the 1980s, however, one that gives greater importance to conventional considerations of state interest. The unprecedented relationship the Reagan administration formed with Israel materialized only when interest no longer appeared to stand in the way of greater intimacy. Spiegel writes that it was only after the fall of the Shah and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that Israel was taken seriously as a possible strategic asset. But a relationship of intimacy did not develop in the wake of these events (in either the Carter or Reagan administrations). It was only in late 1983, as Spiegel notes, over two years into the Reagan administration, that this closer relationship became increasingly apparent. By that time, the circumstances that had earlier defined the American predicament in the Persian Gulf were clearly changing. The earlier threat of restricted Western access to the Gulf had already diminished markedly by virtue of the course taken by the Iran-Iraq War and the difficulties experienced by Moscow's forces in Afghanistan. So too, the oil crisis was visibly receding. In consequence, the Arab star was no longer seen to be rising, as it had been for a number of years, and no longer compelled the deference in Washington as it once had. Not only had the Arab world not achieved, through its control over oil, the power and influence its leaders had dreamed of achieving, but in the wake of the war in Lebanon that world was plainly in disarray.

It was in the context of Arab decline that the intimate relationship between the United States and Israel emerged. It was only once the pressures associated with the oil crisis lessened significantly that even an administration as favorable to Israel as the Reagan administration could follow its natural inclination. If this is still considered to be the triumph of ideals and emotional attachment over a cold reason of state, it is clearly a qualified triumph. De Gaulle may have exaggerated, but the American-Israeli relationship in the 1980s is not quite the exception to his dictum that it is often represented as being.

The recent intimacy of the U.S.-Israeli relationship has now come to an end. Well before the outbreak of the present crisis in the Persian Gulf, the Bush administration had shown that it had little disposition to entertain the kind of relationship with Israel its immediate predecessors did. The Gulf crisis, whatever its outcome, is almost bound to strengthen a pre-existing disinclination to identify anywhere near as closely with Israel. Although Spiegel exaggerates, I think, when he says that the peril posed by Iraq will prove even more powerful than the old Soviet threat as a cause for American concern, he is surely right in emphasizing that the Iraqi crisis has given America's Arab friends a new bargaining chip with Washington—one that will have the effect of further eroding U.S.-Israeli ties.

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The ending of the Cold War will also serve to weaken the relationship. In the Reagan years, the Israelis clearly benefitted from the conflict with the Soviet Union. Far from being regarded as an impediment in the great contest with Moscow, as earlier administrations had often regarded it, Israel was seen as a resolute warrior in the apparently never-ending struggle. To the Reagan administration and its supporters, Israel was found to be more determinedly resistant to Soviet expansion than America's great allies. Anticommunism was one of the values the Reagan administration shared with Israel, and to Ronald Reagan and his close supporters, it was of crucial importance.

WITH THE disappearance of the Cold War, a common dedication to the struggle against tyranny must radically shrink in significance. Spiegel perceptively notes that with respect to U.S.-Israeli relations, the prime impact of the end of the Cold War is to rob Americans of a "missionary focus," something from which Israel benefitted greatly in the past. That focus, which we might roughly equate with the traditional American purpose, did indeed constitute a major factor in the American commitment to Israel, a commitment that long antedated the Reagan administration but one the administration carried to new limits. A waning of the ideological dimension in American foreign policy, an almost predictable long-term result of the ending of the Cold War, is bound eventually to affect the American-Israeli relationship and the very meaning of the American commitment to Israel.

While the above developments have set the stage for a substantial change in American-Israeli relations, they do not necessarily herald a crisis in these relations. What they clearly do point to is a more modest relationship. Spiegel appears to equate substantial change with crisis, as do many others, but it seems unnecessary and misleading to do so. A crisis in the relationship would not occur if it were to return, as indeed it is now returning, to the pre-Reagan period. That period, after all, represents the norm; the Reagan years constitute the exception. Those years were not only a departure from the norm, but they witnessed the rise of a relationship that, in its intimacy, simply could not be sustained. By almost any reasonable yardstick that is applied to affairs of state, it was unnatural. It presupposed a coincidence, if not an identity, of interest that does not exist between states. That coincidence did not exist between the United States and Israel in the 1980s and, even more clearly, it does not exist today. If only that simple, yet fundamental, truth were once acknowledged, and its inescapable consequences faced, it would cut short an endless amount of unnecessary discussion and debate.

Spiegel believes that U.S.-Israeli relations may well be approaching a time of crisis primarily because the ties made up of shared ideals and values are now increasingly placed in question. In his view, it is not so much differences of interest that jeopardize these relations as it is the "ideological disillusionment" that increasingly marks them, a disillusionment aggravated today by an administration in Washington that is unsympathetic and without vision and a government in Jerusalem that is unbending and arrogant. The bond of interest may not prove strong enough, in the end, to sustain a progressive erosion of the emotional attachment to Israel born of and sustained by a conviction of shared ideals and values.

In my judgment, the realities of U.S.-Israeli relations today, and the realities of American politics, point to a different conclusion. While the coincidence of interests Spiegel finds in these relations seems to me quite exaggerated, it does not follow that a time of crisis is near at hand. Even if he is largely right—as I think he probably is—about a growing ideological disillusionment, the inevitability of crisis does not follow. A lessening of the emotional bonds between the two countries need not place in jeopardy their political relationship. For that to happen, public disillusionment with Israel would have

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to progress much further than it shows any prospect of doing today. Of course, a radical change in U.S.-Israeli relations could come if it were made plainly apparent that the policies pursued by Israel threatened vital American interests. This prospect, too, seems very unlikely. If the congruence of American and Israeli interests is not nearly as great as Spiegel thinks, the conflict of interests between the two states has never approached the seriousness that critics of America's Israeli policy insist.

American support of Israel is certainly an impediment to the maintenance of better relations with the Arab states. It does not follow that the removal of this impediment would result in good relations with these states; they have many reasons for resisting American influence and power which have little to do with Israel. To force Israel to accept a satisfactory resolution of the Palestinian issue, whatever that might mean, would sooner or later require threatening the cutoff of American support to that country. No administration could contemplate with anything but horror the domestic political struggle to which this threatened abandonment would lead.

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The Wrong Framework

Neal Kozodoy

STEVEN SPIEGEL'S skillful rehearsal of American diplomatic history demonstrates beyond a doubt the inutility of his conceptual frame—if not to the past, then to the present. Idealism versus *realpolitik*, ideology versus pragmatism: how thoroughly these oppositions distort.

In what sense, for instance, can the actions taken by the Bush administration in its (now temporarily deflected) "commitment to moving the peace process forward"—they are detailed by Spiegel himself as a series of steps aimed at pressuring Israel to negotiate with the PLO—be credited as pragmatic? Not only have they failed to address, let alone to accommodate, the interests of our Israeli ally; not only have they predictably stimulated the most extreme and the least realistic ambitions on the Palestinian Arab side; not only have they offered, therefore, no recipe for "peace" but an invitation to endless conflict, but they cut, indeed, wildly across the truly pragmatic and strategic need of the United States, which is to maintain stability in the Middle East. Considered as *realpolitik*, the obsession of the administration with "solving" the Israeli-Palestinian problem has been incomprehensible; in pursuit of that grail, our headlong fling with the party of radical revolutionism, our fastidious irritation with the party of settled adherence to law, have belied utterly that penchant for practicality accepted by Spiegel as the hallmark of the Bush-Baker worldview. What oxygen we may have thereby also siphoned to Middle Eastern pyromaniacs other than Arafat can be grounds, now, for informed conjecture.

The historian David Vital has provided a closer approximation than Spiegel's of the two warring impulses in American foreign policy: on the one hand a "dislike of change and disturbance," which translates into a steady preference for the status quo, and on the other hand "the welcome [America] is inclined to offer. . . to any serious opportunity to reshuffle the political cards and deal itself and its preferred partners new and superior cards"—also known as the tendency, sometimes fatal, to think "in terms of the *solution* of problems." The end of the superpower confrontation in the Middle East clearly suggested such a "serious opportunity" to American diplomacy, while also offering to an administration conspicuously quiescent during the upheavals in Eastern Europe a field on which, at last, to run.

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Where more tempting to exercise, in Vital's words, that "deep desire (again, distinctively American) to establish an improved world order" than on the site of one of the world's most incorrigible conflicts? "Bush and Baker's task," writes a sympathetic Spiegel, "is inherently far more difficult than Kissinger's [in mediating between Israel and Egypt after 1973] because they are dealing with the most emotional and vexing issue of the conflict, the Palestinian question." But who asked them to, and in the name of what?

America has been playing, then, its wonted role of "idealist"—which also means, in a pattern of experience stretching back over some decades and continents, acting in a willfully prejudicial manner toward its democratic ally. So it has been left for the Shamir government in Israel, a government seen by Spiegel as "committed to the realization of nationalist goals and ideological aspirations," to follow instead that path of caution, of "strong reliance on short-term tactics for addressing immediate problems," which he misleadingly ascribes to Bush and Baker. In the face of the two dynamic forces of Palestinian nationalism/irredentism and American interventionism, it is Israel which over the last period, for better or worse, has been almost wholly reactive, almost wholly pragmatic.

SPIEGEL WRITES sharply of the "chaos into which Israel's internal political life has descended," of the "unseemly squabbling and back-biting," the "constant bickering." "Many of Israel's friends," he notes, "are repulsed by the obdurate, uncompromising, dogmatic treatment by Israelis of each other," and he does not hesitate to connect this impression of internal disarray with the "devastating effect" abroad of Israel's "appearing to oppose negotiations" and of failing to take "positive steps toward alleviating the Palestinian question." "George Bush and James Baker are not the only skeptics." As to that, he is certainly correct. Yet Israel's undeniably fractious system, tattered at the edges and partisan to a fault, covers a solid consensus of opinion in the middle, a coherent political center of voters whose characteristic, symbolic act in recent years has been to reject polarization and to elect and reelect governments of national unity, the last of which American mischief helped to bring down only a matter of months ago.

That consensus has so far stood against outright annexation of the occupied territories, but also and more forcefully against a PLO state. Again for better or worse, this is where the Israeli people, by grace of God free and independent, are. That they are also an excitable people, anxious, escapist, emotionally a little soft (among their enemies they are notorious for the inability to take casualties in war), and by now more than a little desperate for repose, may help to account for the appearance of waywardness in their politics. But their failure to produce a "positive" plan for an exit from their impasse is attributable wholly to the implacable nature of the impasse itself, in the face of which their stubborn and valiant "negativism" amounts to the height of practical wisdom.

"Neither the Israelis, the Palestinians, nor the Arabs have had sufficient unity of purpose, commitment to a particular course, or trust in their adversaries to adopt in full the recommendations of the Bush administration." Of the Israelis, at least, it can be asserted with some confidence that they do indeed possess sufficient unity of purpose, sufficient commitment to a general if not a particular course, and above all sufficient trust in the evil intentions of their adversaries to have developed the habit—would that Steven Spiegel still shared it—of wariness. It is really no surprise that, to them, what Spiegel calls the "impartiality" of the Bush administration's "recommendations" seems but the latest version of yesterday's "evenhandedness," that is, an active American effort, perhaps well-meaning, to make them accept a bad deal with the forces that are determined to kill them.

Spiegel holds out the specter of "ideological disillusionment," a loss of faith here in the "rightness of [Israel's] cause and [in] the

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power of the two countries' common ideals"; with the leaching of that mortar, "the bond which has kept the two countries together will be greatly, perhaps irreparably, damaged." That he himself has not a word to say in defense of Israel's "cause" suggests the degree to which he has internalized the administration's (and not just the administration's) reading of the American interest and what it now requires. But it is worth pointing out that so far, at any rate, what the bickering and humanly imperfect Israelis have proposed to do in the name of our "two countries' common ideals" is to keep their green land, which they have made, their lawful and, in spite of everything, moderate society, and their liberty, kindred with our own. If we are nevertheless to part with them, let us not seek to deceive ourselves with words.

Neal Kozodoy is editor of Commentary.

The Strategic Irrelevance of Israel

Graham E. Fuller

THOUGH I concur with much of Steven Spiegel's historical analysis, I find myself at odds with his fundamental assertion that Israel is and will remain "a useful ally on a wide range of global and regional problems." In fact, to my mind, the Iraq-Kuwait crisis has made one thing quite clear: the near strategic irrelevance of Israel to the U.S. when it comes to coping with inter-Arab crises. During the Cold War, America's strategic alliance with Israel made some sense in view of the possible need to repel either a Soviet invasion of the region, or a Soviet-backed radical Arab move against Israel or its moderate Arab neighbors. The end of the Cold War eliminates that need. Israel cannot—at this stage of its evolution—play a significant role in regional Arab crises. Any Israeli involvement in the politics of the region instantly transforms that issue into a facet of the broader Arab-Israeli conflict—which none of the parties in the region needs.

The Iraqi crisis also reminds us once again that the Palestinian issue is integrally linked with almost any conflict that emerges in the area. Just as the prism of the Cold War warped America's perception of each conflict around the globe—as we examined its impact on the East-West chess game—so too the Palestinian-Israeli problem warps perception of all events in the Middle East, forcing the U.S. to cope daily with the long shadows of that conflict as we try to forge effective Arab cooperation to meet Iraq's relentless drive toward regional hegemony.

The third thing the crisis emphasizes is that the Middle East is such a dangerous place that, perhaps more than any other, it requires a concerted international order that can stop not only Saddam, but any future Saddams as well.

Contrary to what Steven Spiegel believes, the strategic interests of no one—not America, Israel, or the Arabs—are served over the long run by the maintenance of the U.S.-Israeli strategic alliance. The United States wishes to operate freely, unhindered by Israel's refusal to consider land for peace—an agenda that drifts ever further away from the rest of the world. Israel itself needs to operate as an independent state in the region, and not as somebody's strategic instrument. The Arab states need to begin working with each other in the region without constant obsession with the Palestinian problem that so plagues their every move even today. Cutting the binding and usually conflicting ties of the present alliance will better serve everyone's interest.

Israel is a very important state in terms of its military power, its cultural richness, its democratic traditions, and the skills of its people. Israel, too, must have the right to become a "normal" state in the Middle East;

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no other development can be so important to its future. It must move to cut the apron strings of reliance on, and identification with, "imperial powers" as it seeks to coexist in the region. In years past, the idea of Israel coexisting with Arab states was not really thinkable. Today that equation is changing. Saddam can thrill a few disenfranchised or desperate Arabs with his saber-rattling, but on the whole the Arab world is not buying.

Until now, contemporary Middle Eastern politics have been essentially dominated by a "Wild West" approach to regional crisis. When things start getting bad, eventually some "stranger" emerges from the wings—usually America or Israel—to set things right with a lightning war, or invasion, or air strike, or commando raid, or flotilla of warships. When the villain—Qaddafi, the PLO, Syria, Iran, or whoever—has been chastised or smitten, the "lone sheriff" withdraws from the scene. This kind of ad hoc approach made some sense during the Cold War when few international mechanisms could be made to work. But today the Iraqi crisis seems to herald the first steps toward a more workable international order—one in which reasonable international consensus can be reached to take joint defensive action.

It would be naive to think that the Middle East will overnight be transformed into a mini-Switzerland of peacefully coexisting nationalities, or that conflict is a thing of the past. Far from it. But the present crisis does suggest the glimmerings of some rudimentary new approach to regional security that may not automatically require a lone sheriff to step in to solve the situation every time.

ISRAEL HAS historically moved brilliantly on that kind of political-military stage. Indeed, should a nascent international order start operating in the Middle East it will inevitably turn on regional compromise: a new milieu which, in the eyes of some Israelis, will crimp their traditional dramatic style of delivering swift and rough summary justice to those states which threaten its existence. It will be difficult for Israel to contemplate a new approach—one shorn of the ideological clarities of war and peace, aggression and retribution—that will be dominated by the exhausting hassles characteristic of multilateral action and regional accommodation. Arab states, too, will find the transition ungratifying in the meager space it allots to grand expressions of nationalism and military swashbuckling.

No regional order is going to function until the Palestinian quest for self-determination has been met. This issue is the very symbol of the Arab-Israeli conflict; only its resolution can unlock the door to a broader settlement—requiring Israel to give up its dreams of a "Big Israel" and for the Palestinians to forget about getting back "all of Palestine." Only then can we foresee the bulk of Arab states moving toward normalization of relations with Israel—and the first stage in the normalization of Israel itself. Only then, too, will Israel be free to take some gradual but genuine steps toward a regional role. Otherwise we simply cannot live with the region resembling, to change the metaphor, a cage of lions constantly requiring the presence of the lion trainer. That is not an acceptable international security mechanism.

It is for this reason that the United States must set its sights on grappling with the fundamental pathology of the region. As we do so, we must be realistic about the pace of the process. It will not come overnight, and, yes, there may even be more wars as we struggle to bring some more satisfactory order into being. But that newer order will never emerge until we begin to cope with those features that help perpetuate the pathology: the paranoia stemming from decades of colonial intervention (and Western insensitivity to those feelings); the massive dislocations to community and identity that modernization produces; the absence of representative governments; the continuing search for Palestinian self-determination; the relative inequity in the distribution of wealth; and the Arabs' sense that the strategic character of their oil resources by definition de-

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nies them the sovereign disposition of those resources and makes them vulnerable to regular intervention of outsiders. These are deeply complex, long-range issues. They are also the issues the developed world will be concerned with deep into the next century as we seek to build a new order.

In this context, the U.S. strategic alliance with Israel is both an antiquated tool to fashion order and a limited, short-sighted approach to regional crisis. The United States, must of course, maintain its full commitment to Israel's security; that is a long-standing moral and cultural obligation. Bilateral exchanges will continue. Our national ties with Israel will remain close in broad spheres of life. But we must get on with the business of grappling with the region's real needs, including Israel's. The days of sharing joint policing roles are over. We must begin the new approach now, if America, Israel, and the Arab states are to begin to fulfill their true potential instead of being locked into self-fulfilling prophecies about the implacability of each side's position.

There are some auspicious signs. The Russians are no longer the problem, but part of the solution. The UN may now be reborn. For the first time tools now appear available to do the job. We, and Israel, need a commensurate vision. The narrow vision of the "strategic relationship" no longer meets reality.

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Discredited Conventional Wisdom

Douglas J. Feith

AS STEVEN Spiegel's often incisive analysis suggests, the relationship between Israel and the United States has some of the organic qualities of a coral bridge. It is an elaborate, jagged structure that has grown by accretion over the years. Though subject to cracking in rough weather, it has proven sturdy and capable of regenerating itself, from the days of the U.S. arms embargo during Israel's 1948–49 Independence War, to the current era of the *intifada*, U.S.-PLO dialogue, and Persian Gulf crisis.

Champions of U.S.-Israeli cooperation say that the bridge carries valuable traffic in two directions. But some U.S. officials see it primarily as a hazardous reef, an impediment to propositions they would like to float with the Arabs.

Among this bridge's most noteworthy structural features is the breadth of its base—congressional support (from liberals and conservatives), the interests of different offices at different times within the executive branch, the devotionof the great majority of American Jews, and the surprisingly steady sympathy of the general American public.

Because the U.S.-Israeli relationship draws on support from so many quarters, its major elements—military and intelligence cooperation, foreign aid, academic collaboration, tourism—are remarkably secure. They are not at the mercy of any one U.S. official. Even when a president gets deeply riled over Israeli policy—as, for example, Jimmy Carter did—the U.S. foreign aid program continues and may even expand. Even when a secretary of defense continually condemns Israeli actions—as, for example, Caspar Weinberger did—breakthrough advances can occur in U.S.-Israeli strategic relations.

And even when the news media fill with negative stories about Israel—for example, during the Lebanon War or the early months of the *intifada*—popular U.S. support for Israel remains high. Though polls show dips during periods when negative reporting is most intense, support rises again soon thereafter to the previous levels. (As with many issues, our public's views on

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Israel, being basically favorable, are at odds with the views prevailing in the "journalist class," among whom epidemic hostility to the Jewish state has developed over the last twenty years.)

Professor Spiegel highlights the point that Israel's reputation has suffered in the United States in recent years. But the general public's continued willingness to support (or, at a minimum, to tolerate) strong backing for Israel by Congress is of greater practical significance than general speculations about "reputation." Whatever one makes of the various public opinion polls on the subject, the fact remains that Congress, a sensitive barometer of public opinion in its own right, has felt comfortable mandating increasingly favorable measures for Israel over the last fifteen years or so.

Because U.S.-Israeli disagreements receive a great deal of news commentary, often couched in dire language, it is easy to mistake turbulence in the relationship for volatility. In fact, however, continuity has been the hallmark of U.S.-Israeli relations.

This continuity is both good and bad news for Israel. On the one hand, there is comfort in the abundant historical evidence that quarreling between Washington and Jerusalem need not negate or even disturb the relationship's most valuable features. On the other hand, history offers little hope that the relationship's major problems will be alleviated, let alone cured.

ATOP THE list of major problems are certain mutually reinforcing assumptions about the Middle East that have long done service as conventional wisdom among U.S. policy-makers: (1) Moderate Arabs would be ready for ample cooperation with the United States—regarding the Cold War, oil policy, Iraqi aggression, whatever—if (and only if) we could "solve" the Arab-Israeli conflict; (2) Arab ambitions toward Israel are now moderate and could be satisfied if Israel made limited withdrawals from the territories; and, (3) the Arab-Israeli conflict is in essence not a war by the Arab states against Israel, but a fight between Israel and the "stateless" Palestinians. (A fourth assumption—that a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is urgent because war between the parties could ignite a war between the United States and the Soviet Union—was a casualty of the demise of the Soviet empire.)

The current Gulf crisis can be seen as thoroughly discrediting that conventional wisdom. First of all, when Arab states have wanted to cooperate with the United States for reasons of their own, they have always done so, regardless of U.S.-Israeli ties. The Gulf crisis illustrates the point vividly. Second, to the Arab masses "the occupied territories" from which Israel must be ousted include not only the land captured in the 1967 war, but all of pre–1967 Israel too—that is, the entire portion of Palestine under Jewish "occupation." The eruption of mass Arab support for Saddam in Jordan and elsewhere in the region (including Israel) has so horrified Israeli doves precisely because it melts away the distinction between "the occupied territories" and Israel. The Arab man in the street apparently wants to wipe Israel off the map as thoroughly as Saddam has done the deed to Kuwait.

Finally, to assert that the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the unfulfilled nationalism of the Palestinians is to imply that Iraq would cease to oppose the Jewish state if Yassir Arafat cut a deal with Israel for some territory. But in battling against Zionism, Saddam has set himself up as a leader of the Arab nation, not a mere obedient Iraqi supporter of the "Palestinian people." The PLO has no power to compromise Iraq's rejection of Israel. Nothing Saddam has ever said suggests that the Palestinians, as a matter of self-determination, have the right to relinquish the Arab nation's claims to all of Palestine.

Indeed, the idea that the Palestinian Arabs are a nationality unto themselves, distinct from other Arab peoples and entitled to self-determination as such, hardly squares with the popular Arab view that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait is an internal Arab affair—an internal

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affair of the one Arab nation. The same Arab leaders who tell Westerners that their war against Israel is a fight for national self-determination for the "stateless" Palestinians side with Saddam in denying legitimacy to the "imperialist borders" throughout the region that have "artificially" divided the Arab nation and frustrated its aspirations for national unity. "Palestinian Arab self-determination" is a potent concept in the war against Zionism. But Arabs who use pan-Arabist ideology to deny Kuwait's separate identity and national rights can have no justification for preserving a separate Palestinian national identity once Israel is gone.

If the conventional wisdom in Washington about the Middle East were subject to skeptical, scientific reexamination, it would not survive the Gulf crisis. It would not, for that matter, have survived up until the Gulf crisis. But the conventional wisdom is made of stern stuff, and history teaches that its staying power far exceeds its validity. Therefore, though the Gulf crisis should promptly bring about a major improvement in U.S.-Israeli relations based on a clearer appreciation of Israel's security predicament and the limits of peace diplomacy, it almost certainly will not.

The many predictions (including Professor Spiegel's) that President Bush will use the Gulf crisis eventually as a springboard for a new Arab-Israeli peace initiative—one focusing on Israeli control of the West Bank as the core of the conflict—are probably correct. Partly because of the Iraqi situation, however, the Shamir government commands unusually strong domestic support for a conservative, security-minded policy toward any such initiative. If President Bush tries to push Shamir, the latter will be inclined and well-positioned to hold his ground.

Will this strain the relationship? Yes, in the great tradition. But the danger should not be overstated, as I believe it is in Professor Spiegel's analysis.

There is no evidence of serious "corrosion" of U.S. support for Israel regarding issues that present clear pro-Israel and anti-Israel alternatives. When a government in Israel puts forward both a dovish policy option and a hard-line option (as occurred when Shamir and Peres each had top-level positions in their National Unity Coalition), many Americans (including American Jews) will prefer the dovish option. But now, with disillusioned Israeli doves lying low and not drumming up opposition abroad to the Shamir government, the politically relevant American Jewish community and large majorities in the U.S. Congress can be counted on to discourage action to coerce Jerusalem, for coercion would be seen as anti-Israel rather than pro-dove. Building domestic (including congressional) support for pressure against Israel is even more problematic while memories remain fresh of masses of Palestinians demonstrating in solidarity with Saddam and calling for Iraq to hit Israel with chemically armed missiles.

President Bush seems intent nonetheless on reviving his Arab-Israeli diplomatic efforts through twisting arms in Jerusalem. Can he really believe that political circumstances in Israel and the United States yield him a good chance of success based on an affordable investment of personal prestige and other political capital? In any event (luckily for the U.S.-Israeli relationship), his famed pragmatism will probably restrain him from a prolonged and vigorous exercise in banging his head against a thick coral formation. This should contain the damage all around.

Douglas J. Feith, managing attorney of the law firm Feith & Zell, served during the Reagan administration as a Middle East specialist on the National Security Council and then as deputy assistant secretary of defense for Negotiations Policy.

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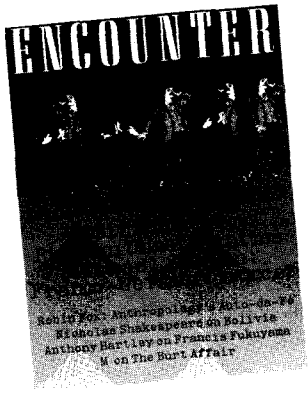

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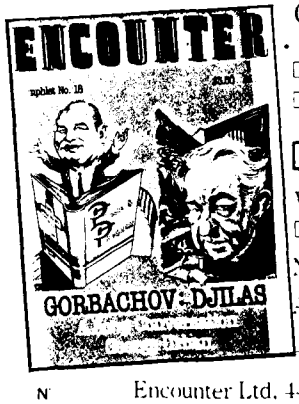

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Why Russia Should Join NATO

From Containment to Concert

Coral Bell

THE SHAPE OF the post-Cold War world is beginning to glimmer hazily through the dust of the Gulf crisis. Its outlines suggest some surprising possibilities: diplomatic options that would have seemed unthinkable even a year ago. But then surprise has been the diplomatic order of the day for quite some time now.

For most of the Cold War years, mainstream Western strategists by and large took it as a semi-permanent state of affairs. The central Western diplomatic concept, "containment," had presented the image of a dam constructed to hold back an unremitting *permanent* pressure. And though the diplomat who proposed that strategy, George Kennan, had originally suggested that it might, after fifteen years or so, result in "the mellowing or the breakup of Soviet power," he did not lay much stress on that element of his analysis. Moreover, since after fifteen years (in 1961–62), the Cold War was just moving into its most dangerous period, with the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, the original Kennan prophecy of an eventual win for the West was rather shrugged off and discounted. The strategic objectives were tacitly assumed by "insiders" to be the avoidance both of nuclear war and of Western defeat without war: the status quo was expected to be undisturbed save for routing hostilities round the peripheries of the rival power-spheres, in the "grey areas." Mainstream strategic ambitions were thus modest enough, though there were always dissentient voices on the Right calling for more ambitious Western objectives like "rollback"; and dissentient voices on the Left saying that the whole Western strategic enterprise of the Cold War was a mistake, or a crime, or a disaster, or all three. On the balance of evidence, it was a necessity, as well as a success.

What we now see, of course, is rollback, not containment: Soviet political power bowing out of Eastern Europe; Soviet diplomatic and ideological influence being shrugged off in most of the Third World; Soviet troops making their exit from the eastern Länder of the reunited Germany; and, astonishingly, the literal "breakup" as well as the "mellowing" of Soviet power. The Soviet empire, which was the old czarist empire considerably swollen in size and held together by terror and ideology, seems at present to be following the other European empires into history, *but by a much faster route.* It is the center, Russia itself, which "wants out" of the system as much as the potential peripheral new sovereignties—contrary to what the British, French, Dutch, and Belgian empires found in their own paths to dissolution.

The only direct parallel for the recent Russian transformation of imperial assump-

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tions is that with Portugal in 1974. There, a left-wing revolution replaced the previous political elite, so that what had been a stubborn, bloody-handed determination to hang on to colonial possessions was transformed in a few weeks into an unseemly haste in getting rid of them. Similarly, the current revulsion of opinion against the Soviet ideology seems to have produced a profound and candid eagerness to get rid of all the old regime's works, including its imperial system. Thus one can expect the dissolution process to be much faster than the twenty-five years or so of the British or French imperial dismantlings. (Not that the Portuguese example is much of a recommendation for haste: two of the colonial territories, Angola and Mozambique, fell into prolonged civil wars; a third, East Timor, was swallowed by a neighbor, Indonesia; and a fourth, Guinea-Bissau, by Marxist darkness.)

However, to revert to the contemporary world where, as the West German chancellor said last July, "the future is beginning," prospects by the middle of the decade seem to be of a new central balance of power whose most cryptic member may be Russia, rather than the Soviet Union. Whether as a sovereign entity it proves to be larger or smaller than its present size, Russia will still be a potent as well as longstanding member of the central balance, having been part of it ever since the concept was defined in sixteenth-century Europe. Russia thus will be an experienced player in the game of nations, whose former traditions were by no means entirely lost in the seventy years or so of the Soviet period, and still very much the largest of the European powers in population and resources. It will remain the most formidable strategically too, since even assuming an improbable level of success for START and the other arms negotiations, Russia will probably still have in stock at least 6,000 nuclear warheads on long-range systems, a very large navy, and the other strategic appurtenances of the superpower it recently was. On the other hand, for quite a while it seems likely to be the most economically disorganized and necessitous of the major powers: at least for this decade and possibly much longer. The social problems that more than seventy years of a command economy and authoritarian politics have engendered are not going to be cured rapidly.

A profound disparity already has defined itself between the strategic rank-order of the major powers and their economic rank-order. The strategic hierarchy for a six-power central balance would still read: the United States, Russia (or the Soviet Union), the European Community (or European Confederation), China, India, and Japan. The economic hierarchy would read: the European Community or Confederation (which by mid-decade may be at least 30 percent larger than the United States), the United States, Japan (by then about 70 percent the size of the U.S.), then possibly China, with India and the Soviet Union bringing up the rear.

Being edged out of the top place in economic clout may be mildly galling for some Americans, but it already has its compensations. For instance, if there is any "Marshall Plan" for Eastern Europe, including Russia, it is the Western Europeans whose surpluses should logically finance it. Similarly, if some analogous project emerges for China, Japanese surpluses are the obvious source. A diminution of American burdens may mean a dilution of American diplomatic ascendancy, but that change is inherent, in any case, in the mutation from bilateral to multilateral balance. The change means that the paramountcy of both the Soviet Union and the United States must be reduced in the new, looser, somewhat more egalitarian diplomatic relationship. The State Department has already had a taste of that change, finding itself distinctly relegated to a "back seat" on the vital deal between Gorbachev and Kohl over a reunited Germany's place in NATO. Economically, rather the same sort of thing happened vis-á-vis Japan at the G–7 meeting in Houston. The Bush policy-makers, especially James Baker, seem to have gulped a bit, but otherwise made no audible fuss. (Of course, it is not Washington that is most

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sensitive to the possibility that the new Europe may prove to be Germany writ large. That fear roosts in the other European capitals—especially London, as was indicated in the brouhaha over Nicholas Ridley's *Spectator* interview and his forced departure from the Thatcher government. The apprehensions so tactlessly revealed in that incident are very widespread beneath the surface in much of Europe, especially among people over fifty who remember World War II.)

The Balance Then and Now

YET THE balance of *forces* has so far changed much less than the balance of *power*, which seems rather a reversal of the usual historical sequence. The difference is that the balance of power starts with the balance of forces (existing military hardware, personnel, and deployments) but adds to that relatively straightforward summation several less obvious and less immediate factors: economic, political, ethnic, diplomatic, and ideological. And it is in that group of factors that the recent changes have been so favorable to the West. On the straight "bean count" of weapon systems, some strategic analysts would in fact argue that recent change has been in favor of Moscow. Of course, major weapon systems have a ten-year "lead time," so what is coming off the production lines in the Soviet Union these days is the fruit of decisions made in the Brezhnev era. But while this situation persists, a certain caution about arms cuts and such remains necessary.

Because the transformations in Europe have been so swift, so dramatic, and so benign, most analysis has concentrated on them. But in the world outside Europe (whose problems tend to be airily relegated to second-rate status by NATO policy-makers, despite their having produced all the shooting wars of the Cold War period, and possibly the first of the post-Cold War period), the changes in the central balance and the decline of Russian influence are producing the largest reshuffle in power relationships since the end of the Western colonial empires. Not all these changes are welcome to local players.

In effect, the reduction in central balance tensions has reduced the incentives for both the Soviet Union (or Russia) and the United States to recruit for, or even maintain, their respective groups of strategic "fellow travellers." They are able now to make new cost-benefit analyses of their overall diplomatic relationships, with results in many cases highly disconcerting to the minor powers concerned, whether aligned or non-aligned. There is already quite a group of governments with some reason to be nostalgic for the straightforward days of the Cold War, and there will be more.

All that might have been written before the Gulf crisis. The latest surprise, from world reaction to that ambitious desperado, Saddam Hussein, is the revived possibility of a global concert of powers. I say revived rather than newly arisen, because if one reverts historically to the year before the opening of the Cold War (to 1945 and the creation of the United Nations) that was then still the expectation of the time. The Security Council was designed almost explicitly as a five-power concert, complete with veto power for each of the permanent members. It hardly ever worked in the subsequent forty-five years, of course, because it supposed a level of common assumptions and objectives among the central balance powers that was quite incompatible with the policies of Stalin and his successors. Until the time of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, that is.

In the Gulf crisis, the concert of powers has reappeared, lightly disguised as the United Nations, and speaking the language of UN resolutions and such. There is nothing to be said against that in present circumstances, but it may prove unwieldy and inconvenient as a basis for crisis management in the future, as it has been in the past. In the one parallel case, Korea, the UN aspect of the operation wore very thin quite rapidly. But there is already available some sturdier and more manageable diplomatic scaffolding than the UN for a workable concert of powers. And it

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exists in a diplomatic structure already conscious of a need for some redefinition of purposes for the post-Cold War period: NATO.

That organization was, from 1949 to 1989, in effect the status quo alliance of the old bilateral balance of power. In that function it had a truly notable success. Sun Tzu, the great Chinese strategist of the third century B.C., reflects that the truly great successful commander is the one who wins the war without actually having to fight the battles. NATO certainly won its war—the Cold War—without having, as an alliance, to fight any of the battles, though individual members of NATO—the United States, Britain, France, Turkey—did fight battles, in Korea and Vietnam and the Falklands and Suez. The same NATO powers, unlike some of their alliance brethren, have been to the fore militarily and diplomatically in the Gulf conflict. Much is to be attributed to the persistence of national traditions in alliance relationships.

Actually NATO has never worked very well in what are called, in the alliance's jargon, "out-of-area issues": that is, conflicts arising beyond the treaty area. That has not been surprising, since the agreement was designed and drafted in 1948–49 to meet the one overwhelming diplomatic and military assumed threat of those years—the possible expansion of Soviet power westward in Europe. But the point is important when we consider the nature and functions of a potential "NATO Mark II," so I will return to it.

As the original organization was the status quo alliance of the original bilateral balance of power, "NATO Mark II" would be the status quo alliance of the emerging multilateral balance. Its basic function would be the same: what would change is the context in which it would operate. And that is already happening, so going along with it is a kind of recognition of the necessities of history.

At this point we need to consider the difference between a balance of power and a concert of powers. A balance of power will change in response to impersonal historical factors like rates of economic development, demographic growth or decline, technology and geopolitics, the flowering and withering of ideologies. All those factors, especially the economic and ideological ones, helped along the mutation from the original balance of 1949 to the emerging multilateral balance of 1989. By contrast, constructing a multilateral *concert* of powers, based on the pattern of power distribution provided by history, requires something more. It requires bold and sometimes radical or imaginative choices on the part of the decision-makers of the time.

That is why the Gulf crisis seems to me a true catalyst in international politics, especially in the evolving relationship of the central balance powers, speeding up changes in a larger world in which Saddam Hussein himself will have, let us hope, only a brief and marginal role.

The two main decisions that I point to as evidence of this are, first, Bush's decision to invite the collaboration of the policy-makers in Moscow in resolving the Gulf crisis; and second, Gorbachev's decision to accept that bid. Though the declaratory policies of both governments have been put into UN language, and the UN is a useful source of legitimation, especially for minor powers, both those basic decisions have less to do with the UN than with a sort of "grandmother's steps" movement toward a power concert.

In their respective ways, they are equally bold departures from earlier policies. Perhaps this is more consciously the case for the Russians, since the decision meant abandoning what had previously been classed as a useful ally, Iraq, and firmly disappointing the earlier expectations of various would-be revolutionary challengers to the status quo, like the Palestinians. Of course that is pretty much in line with various other Gorbachev policy changes in the Third World, from Angola to Nicaragua and Vietnam. But in this case it has been more explicitly geared to relations with the United States. In fact Gorbachev's aide, Yevgeny Primakov, when departing on his diplomatic mission to the Gulf, said, in effect, that the area was a sort of

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laboratory for an experiment in collaboration with the United States.

The American departure from previous policy was almost as bold. After all, the United States has devoted itself pretty assiduously over the past two or three decades to keeping Soviet power out of the Middle East and the Gulf, not only as a gesture to Israel (though that has been very important politically) but because of the consciousness that Gulf oil was even more vital to its Japanese and European allies than to its own economy. For geographic reasons, it long seemed likely that if push should come to shove in the Gulf, the Russians would always be able to "get there fastest with the mostest," rather than the Americans. But the changes in the Soviet sphere are modifying even that apparent geographic advantage. For if the "shrinkage" of Russian control and responsibility back toward Russia itself continues, Central Asia will be one of the most affected areas. In an extreme case, rather unpredictable local leaders like those of the Azerbaijanis might have more influence than those in Moscow on conditions near the oil fields. As with Britain in 1907, there might come a time when the Russians will seem like even more useful allies in the Gulf.

A cynical old NATO joke (often attributed to Lord Ismay) maintains that the organization was put together to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down. That has been one of those many truths spoken in jest. The necessity of a permanent tie binding the United States to Europe, more surely than the uncertain commitments of the UN, was seen as a vital part of the reinforcement of deterrence with formal obligations, and with actual troop deployments—the American "trip-wire." Apprehensions about the future of German power were far stronger, and voiced far more freely, when West Germany was being recruited to NATO back in 1954–55, than they have been recently. So the American presence in NATO was in those days seen almost as much as an offset to potential future German power as to existing Soviet capacities.

However, that *arrière-pensée* about Germany has been much modified over the decades, as NATO has developed the functions of a "security community" to add to those of a military coalition against a nominated adversary. A security community is defined as a group of nations between whom war has been tacitly ruled out as a means of settling disputes. It has much in common with a security blanket, in that it both *restrains* those who are covered by it in their relations with each other, and *reassures* them in their relations with the outside world. That result can be achieved even when there is a long historic tradition of enmity, as between Greece and Turkey, who might have been at each other's throats many times in the past few decades were it not that both governments have been conscious of the advantages of NATO membership and the risk of its loss.

Better In than Out

THE FURTHER extension of that existing Western security community offers the most promising option for NATO if that organization is to avoid obsolescence. It could be done by one quite simple though radical step: *the offer of membership to Russia and other major members of the now-defunct Warsaw Pact*. If an adversarial relationship with historic roots as deep as those between Greece and Turkey can be restrained by alliance membership, then why not those between Germany and Poland, even Germany and Russia? For that matter, the adversarial relationship between France and Germany has a good deal of history to it, and has been even more completely overlaid by a newer consciousness of a common interest in stability. Most of the Western European members of NATO are also, of course, members of an economic community, but the security relationships came first: 1948–49 for the foundation of NATO, 1957–58 for the Common Market. If the potential gains for stability in what has been historically the very unstable zone of *Mitteleuropa* (the smaller sovereignties wedged between German and

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Russian power) it would be more than ample compensation for whatever is lost by such an enlargement of membership.

ACTUALLY, the idea is not as new as it may seem. Molotov, Stalin's foreign minister before Gromyko, proposed it from time to time back in the 1950s. The Western powers used to brush it off as just the minister's little joke. Quite rightly, because at that time the challenge to the existing world order did come from the Soviet Union, and NATO was firmly and candidly intent on signalling that it was prepared to resist that challenge, by battle if necessary; after 1954, explicitly by nuclear battle if necessary. And battle did seem possible, or on occasions even probable, through almost four decades.

Not any more, however. In fact, challenges to the world order seem unlikely to come from any of the central balance powers for the immediate future, since all six of them have a lot to lose from global instability. Unfortunately that does not mean a world of peace and harmony, since there are likely to be plenty of challenges from *outside* the central balance, from regimes and decision-makers with large ambitions or dogmas or theories, and less to lose: new Saddam Husseins, new Ayatollahs, even new Pol Pots. I will return to those issues presently. First, it is necessary to make a case for the proposed expansion of NATO, in terms of the future diplomatic and strategic roles of Russia, Germany, and the United States.

My starting point is the present Russian security elite, and the sequence of traumas it has recently experienced. The generals have already lost the defensive glacis of Eastern Europe, the command and control structure of the Warsaw Pact, and prospectively the forward-deployed troops in East Germany and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The cuts that they face in conventional weapons as a result of the Conventional Forces in Europe Agreement are enormous, and much larger than those for NATO (about 30,000 tanks, for instance, from the Russian inventory, against about 5,000 from NATO's). Mr. Gorbachev must have recently broken the news that they also face the loss of two or even all four of the Northern Territories, the Japanese islands that were seized by the Russians after World War II and have been reportedly integrated into the radar and sonar defenses of the Sea of Okhotsk, which shelters the vital Soviet last-ditch deterrent force of SLBMs. The START negotiations are moving toward a point at which they promise heavy cuts in other strategic deterrent forces.

Still more trauma, from the point of view of the top brass, is to come. Military goods and services have been absorbing as much as 24 percent of the Soviet GNP over the Cold War decades. If the economic reforms are to work, that must fall toward or below 5 percent. Factories that used to produce tanks and such are already, at least in theory, being turned over to the production of (for example) refrigerators. The peripheral areas of the Soviet sphere that used to produce a lot of conscripts for the Soviet armed forces are ceasing to be willing to do so. They might even be lost to Moscow's military control: at least the fear of that possibility seems to be signalled by the report that nuclear weapons have been pulled out of those regions, back to Russia itself. Most traumatic of all, probably, is the chance that the Ukraine and Byelorussia, which have in the past constituted a vast buffer zone to protect the Russian homeland from attack from the West, might also seek to opt out of Moscow's control.

From the point of view of a strategic analyst, the rate of loss of Soviet strategic assets, as they existed in 1985, is truly staggering. There is still, of course, the long-range nuclear strike capacity, but on past military experience that is only useful for fending off major war. So it is not surprising that the top brass has been sending apparent signals of restlessness, and that consequently rumors of impending military coups have been sweeping Moscow.

It is true that Russia does not have a tradition of military coups, but there is always a first time. The current reforms mean that the prospective careers of many Soviet

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officers will go down the drain. When Khrushchev, in the early 1960s, proposed strategic changes that also would have ended the careers of many officers, the top brass helped or probably even incited his Politburo colleagues to remove him from power. And that was at a time when the Soviet economy looked a lot more promising than it does at the moment.

Those points are intended to make the case that Gorbachev and Yeltsin may require a visible gain in specifically the *security* field if they are to continue to get their policies through—policies that undoubtedly are in line with Western interests. The offer of NATO membership would constitute such a security gain. Last July's NATO communique, which protested that the Soviet Union was no longer seen as an adversary, was intended as a minor signal of the same kind, and it seems in part to have worked at a difficult moment for Gorbachev in the party congress. But alliance membership would be far more convincing as a gesture of recognition of changed circumstances and assumptions.

Moreover, this is one of the respects in which NATO must appear vastly more significant in Moscow than either the UN or the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), which offer the alternative security frameworks. After all, the Soviet Union has been a founding member of both groups, and the average Soviet general does not seem likely to regard either of them as having done much for Russian security. NATO, on the other hand, has been the principle club—in both senses of that word—of the advanced Western powers, and their military elites. It has formalized the one really serious threat that those concerned with Soviet security have faced all their working lives. Admission to its membership would thus be a status symbol *for the military and security elite* of a sort that neither of the other two international forums can provide. And the military and security elite, in present or foreseeable circumstances, might prove the one Russian group able to replace the present decision-makers by others, as was done in the case of Khrushchev. Anything the West can offer to reduce that possibility seems worth some sacrifice. To put it flippantly, better that the Soviet top brass should be speculating on the chances of a spell of the military high life in Brussels, than on the desirability of the army saving Russia from the radicals and the economists.

The "confidence-building measures" promoted by the CSCE have already had a considerable effect on the growth of detente between NATO powers and those of the Warsaw Pact, but a gesture of this magnitude would of course quite out-do them. All those NATO secrets that the KGB has been so assiduously ferreting out these past forty years would be suddenly thrown open—with reciprocity expected, of course.

Incidentally, recruitment of Russia to NATO would be the only condition under which Poland and the other Eastern European countries could also be recruited, and they may be even more in need of a security blanket than Russia, especially in view of the obvious contemporary tendency for countries which were put together from disparate ethnic groups to fall apart (as, for example, Yugoslavia). The world, especially Eastern Europe, may well be entering a period in which several national states will rearrange themselves into confederations or even looser groupings like commonwealths. In such a context, the mix of reassurance and restraint of an alliance or a security community might prove particularly valuable, even essential.

The second and third sardonic rationales for NATO mentioned earlier (keeping the Americans in and the Germans down) seem likely to be rather more difficult in the post-Cold War period, if NATO is confined to its present membership and to its original primary function. Before the Iraqi crisis, neo-isolationist voices were becoming very audible in the United States, mostly from conservatives like Patrick Buchanan. And they did have a case. In effect, Washington in 1946 *had* to take up the burden of containment, since no viable European balance of power against the Soviet Union could be

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constructed at that time in view of the economic devastation and political uncertainties then of Western Europe. Forty years later, a viable European balance of power to contain the far weaker Soviet Union does again seem possible. Two nuclear powers (Britain and France), a large conventional power (Germany), twelve assorted fellow travellers, plus the economic dynamism and ideological élan of Western Europe, ought to more than counterbalance a Russia which is a self-admitted economic failure, unable any longer to control Eastern Europe, probably unable to hold its own contiguous empire together, and lacking any ideological appeal. It still has nuclear strike capacity, but as was pointed out earlier, nuclear capacity does not on past experience seem to translate into anything more than ability to inhibit attack on the homeland of the power concerned. So the case being made before the Iraqi crisis (that America had fulfilled its post-war task and could now bring its forces home and devote its resources to the grave problems of its own society) will be heard again once it is over; probably more bitterly if the costs in Iraq have been heavy and the major allies do not seem to have borne a fair share of them.

If at that point NATO is still confined to its present membership, its leadership might seem logically to fall to Germany, but the ghosts crowding in from history would prevent that from being generally acceptable. If, on the other hand, the membership had been expanded to include the Warsaw Pact powers, Russia would clearly have a claim, and that would prevent the question arising at all, for Washington would be unlikely to feel as much temptation to leave NATO if Russia seemed likely to step into America's shoes. Thus, a valuable element of stability would be preserved. The international system faces so much potential change in the next few years that an abdication of American leadership would overload it with uncertainties.

One of the ghosts of the past that has already been sighted is that of Rapallo: the 1922 treaty which briefly created a special relationship between Russia and Germany, in the days when Stalin was well away in his climb to power in the Soviet Union, and Hitler just setting out on his path to power in Germany. Obviously those are very undesirable ghosts at any feast, but they could be seen lurking in dim corners in the Kohl-Gorbachev agreement. Actually, the circumstances of 1922 and 1990 do have two or three factors in common: Russia needing a lot economically, Germany needing something strategically, and Eastern Europe being a morass of uncertainties. However, the strength of the West is incomparably greater, and it may well be possible to keep it that way, if the right choices are made by contemporary decision-makers.

Thinking the Unthinkable?

THERE ARE various objections that might be made to this line of argument: that the Warsaw Pact powers are not part of the North Atlantic (but surely more so than Greece and Turkey?); that it is too soon after the Cold War to recruit the old adversary to the successful alliance (but Japan was recruited only six years after a "shooting war," in 1951, and Germany only ten years after, in 1955, and those adversary relations had generated a lot more destruction and consequent bitterness than the Cold War). But the real parallel seems to be 1815: the recruitment of France just after the Napoleonic Wars to the status quo alliance, which became the Concert of Europe and helped keep the peace for most of the next century.

It could also be objected that America has no experience of, or enthusiasm for, such notions: they could not be explained to the electorate. Perhaps, but American policymakers did put together most of the original draft of the UN Charter, which was largely a concert system dressed up in Wilsonian rhetoric. Besides, Washington has now had forty-five years experience of the costs, financial and human, of leadership in a mostly bipolar system, and has developed a powerful conviction about the desirability of burden-sharing. The easiest way to ensure that the

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burdens are shared more equitably is to devise a system in which the responsibilities are also shared more equitably. Otherwise there is the risk that American troops might look like mercenaries paid for by the Japanese and Germans, who remain constitutionally aloof from the actual fighting. If the present level of detente and collaboration between Washington and Moscow had developed earlier, when the distribution of power was more bilateral, it would have looked like a potential condominium. And that notion has always aroused a certain amount of apprehension, especially in Europe. In any case, the time for that possibility has passed.

Of course, nations outside the magic circle may well find the idea of a concert of powers rather questionable, especially if they remember its last incarnation in the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe. The objection always made to that system is that while it enabled the great powers to avoid direct hostilities with each other for a century (except for the period of turbulence 1855–70), it thereby gave them a free hand for imperialist acquisitions in what is now called the Third World. That may be true, but it is unlikely to be repeated in the twenty-first century. For the theory that economic prosperity and welfare are to be secured by the direct control of territory or resources is by now totally discounted. No nation has had more expansive territory or more resources at its disposal than the Soviet Union (or the czarist empire that was its previous incarnation). But the Russian people have never exactly been shiny with prosperity in either phase of their history, and their present situation is truly miserable. Conversely, the Western Europeans have never done better economically than since they lost their assorted overseas empires, and found instead their present community. So it would be difficult to make a case on recent historical experience, that either contiguous empire (Russia) or overseas empire (Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Portugal) does much for the living standards of the metropolitan power. Prosperity does not even require size, witness Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan.

Far from the evolving multilateral balance presenting a temptation to new imperial adventures, it could have the opposite effect of enabling the major powers to shrug off their former interest in Third World societies. During the Cold War decades, the United States and the Soviet Union were in the situation of the "anchorman" in a tug-of-war: recruits to the "team" were sought or bought for whatever weight they carried, even if the regimes concerned were politically repellent, strategically marginal, ideologically incompatible, and economically disastrous. Competitive bidding between the adversaries did of course enable the countries concerned to secure assorted benefits, though those benefits were often of a dubious sort: advanced weapon systems from both superpowers, for instance, or Western loans in the 1970s, which were not productively used and merely created heavy debt burdens later. With a multilateral central balance, and not much adversary tension between its members, competitive bidding for the support of peripheral powers should be almost nonexistent. A few commodities, like oil, which are largely produced in Third World countries, might theoretically provide a focus of central balance rivalry, but even that seems unlikely. In the present Iraqi crisis, for example, all six of the central balance powers see their respective interests in the same terms: preventing the flow of oil being blocked or its control taken over by a regional bully who would thereby be able to set world prices.

One might on the whole assume that the declining diplomatic leverage of Third World countries could mean decline in their capacity to secure economic aid, especially in a world in which the competitive demand from Eastern Europe and the Soviet area will be so strong. In a phase of history in which the true division is that between the capital rich (very few) and the capital hungry (very numerous), capital will tend to go where the returns seem most promising. And in a lot of cases that will

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be Eastern Europe: better infrastructure; eager, skilled, but low-paid work forces; more sophisticated technologies; markets in need of practically everything.

THE END of the Cold War might also for a while be diplomatically discomforting for Third World countries in another sense: it will undermine the basis of the doctrine of non-alignment. That doctrine assumed a high-tension bilateral adversary relationship between two superpowers. In a world of six great powers, with no single well-defined central adversary tension, the advantages of avoiding alignment or alliance are hard to see. In fact the cultivation of a "special relationship" with one or other of the central balance powers would seem to hold more prospect of economic advantage, and diplomatic or even military protection where necessary.

More visible already is a sort of compensating ideological benefit for Third World countries that can perhaps be translated into economic and political betterment. Through the decades of the Cold War, and indeed most of the period since 1917—especially when the Soviet Union looked as if it was doing well either strategically or economically (and there were long phases when that assessment was promoted to the Third World by Western journalists and academics)—the bright young would-be leaders of the Third World have been under almost a compulsion to adopt some elements of Leninist theory, especially his theory of imperialism since it offered a rationale for their own drives for power. It also offered an apparent "solution" for the problems of national poverty and backwardness: a command economy governed by a one-party autocracy, as in the Soviet Union. That pernicious illusion ("nationalism painted red," in M.N. Roy's words) set the ideological tone for a great many Third World political elites as they emerged from the British and other Western imperial systems. One can see it as much in the Zimbabwean elite emerging in 1974 as in the Indian equivalent in 1947. But in a world in which it is now possible to carry in Moscow a banner reading "72 Years of Getting Nowhere," and in which it is clear that neither economic nor ethnic problems were solved by the Soviet model, they will have to look elsewhere: to their indigenous traditions, or to Western ones. Some, like Cuba and perhaps North Korea, may be unable to do so until the present leadership is gathered to its ancestors, but many, even perhaps Vietnam, may be able to move away from the old fallacies quite fast. And that should allow more prospect of economic advance. So also should the winding down of regional and domestic conflicts which borrowed some of their momentum from the Cold War. Again that process is already very visible: in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, maybe finally Cambodia and Afghanistan. The central balance powers have little to gain in such strife-torn societies, save expensive dependents: they have, rather, a joint interest in stability, so long as their relations with each other remain on an even keel. To sum up, what Third World societies may lose economically in the post-Cold War society of states, through loss of diplomatic leverage, they may retrieve through the dispelling of some very destructive ideological illusions.

That argument has assumed a rather harmonious, even concert-like, relationship between the six central balance powers. Is such an assumption justified? There is a lot of evidence to support it, at least for the final decade of this millennium. The great central adversary tension of the past forty-five years, that between Russia and the West, seems unlikely to revive in such a span of time, assuming continuance of present trends. In fact, a notable irony of the Western victory in the Cold War is that it has produced a situation in which perhaps the most vital and endangered single Western interest is now the continuance of a benign evolution of events in Russia. That is, evolution toward a market economy, pluralist politics, an agreed and peaceful devolution of power to the other fourteen erstwhile Soviet republics, the maintenance of secure central control over

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the nuclear stockpile (which may still run to about 30,000 warheads), maintenance of competent authority in the nuclear power stations, maintenance of enough political control over military authority to see the arms cuts through, the hardware dismantled, the men demobilized. The factor most likely to disrupt all that would be the eviction of the present leadership from power: hence my argument that Western effort (even sacrifice) is warranted to keep the present evolution on track. There is a parallel between the West's situation vis-á-vis Russia at present, and vis-á-vis Germany and Japan in 1945. Adoption into the Western alliance system worked out well in those two cases.

Until the emergence of Saddam Hussein, Japan almost seemed to be replacing the Soviet Union as the fashionable chief menace on the American horizon. The view provided in some quarters of "Japan as Number One," diplomatically as well as economically, has been (fortunately) deflated by the Gulf crisis. The real vulnerability of the Japanese situation, even economically, has again become obvious. Of the six central balance powers, Japan is least well endowed with the variety of assets that make for a durable great power.

Europe is quite a different proposition: the one true potential competitor for the United States at the top of the economic hierarchy, and even the top of the strategic hierarchy in time. But not yet. For the rest of this millennium, the arguments about the "widening" versus the "deepening" of the Community will keep it busy, and it may be a decade before it develops enough joint political will to make a confederation, much less a federation. China once seemed likely to be able to secure the role and advantages of the "balancer" power when the prospect was of a five-power balance with the strongest tension still that between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, as long as the present Chinese leadership survives and remains determined to resist political liberalization (cultivating market economies and political pluralism), China will be the most isolated, ideologically and politically, of the six, since the other five are all either pluralist or aspiring to be. India seems likely to be the hegemonic power of the Indian Ocean region, as well as the Indian subcontinent, but is neither strategically nor economically at odds with the other five. Like Europe, it has a lot of internal reconciliations and adaptations to make. Thus, for the immediate future, Washington is less challenged as a focus for decision-making for the society of states than it was in the days of the bilateral balance. Then it had a dangerous-seeming rival, at least strategically, and even ideologically, during the earliest decades. Now its other potential challengers are all still some distance down the track. The crucial decisions at present must be Washington's. The Iraqi crisis has made that much clearer than it was six months ago.

The status quo alliance in the society of states is like the protagonist in a classic Greek drama—capable of speaking through many masks. At the moment the convenient one is the United Nations, but the difficulties with that are already being illustrated by the situation of Israel. By sheer weight of numbers, the UN is likely to remain dominated by the Third World. The CSCE, on the other hand, is governed by consensus, so even the smallest powers like Malta can hold up decisions for months, and it is too much based on harmony-of-interest assumptions. NATO, by contrast, has always been run on great-power management, is tough-minded, conflict-conscious, and never likely to underrate the importance of military power. The scaffolding for the new world order will no doubt come from all three, but some of the sturdiest timber could be NATO's.

Much will depend on the outcome of the Iraqi crisis, seen as the exemplar of the sort of crises the society of states is most likely to face in the foreseeable future. James Baker's remark that "the line drawn in the sands of Kuwait was a line drawn in time" may prove true in a larger sense than anyone expected.

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Who Really Buys American?

Bernard K. Gordon

AMERICAN TRADE policy is distorted by a great hoax. Asia is painted as America's economic adversary—the perpetrator of dirty tricks, the enemy of free trade—while Europe and Latin America are barely subjected to scrutiny, much less to public alarm. Belief in Europe's primary role has been heightened by two new developments: the EC–92 plans for economic integration in Western Europe and the movement toward market economies in Eastern Europe. The result is that most Americans, long accustomed to regarding Europe as their main overseas market, now accept without question that it represents their best prospects for the future as well.

None of this is true, but more is at stake than a public opinion error. Trade has become a major foreign policy issue, contributing to the souring of U.S. relations with some Asian governments (the regular outbursts of anti-American violence in Korea are an unhappy example) and especially to the poison eating away at our relationship with Japan. The United States, emerging triumphant after nearly fifty years of Cold War, now risks losing many of the benefits of this victory in Asia. Congress and a segment of the American media are working hard, and with some success, to persuade the American people that Japan is set to replace the USSR as the principal threat to America's primacy—a threat backed by an economic strength and sophistication that Russia never possessed.

An approach to American trade policy based on the premise that Europe is America's friend while Asia is its enemy is fundamentally mistaken. The evidence to the contrary is overwhelming. That evidence shows that, Canada aside, the best foreign markets for the United States, now and in the years ahead, are in the Asia-Pacific region. There are many measures that illustrate this, but three stand out. First, the *value* of U.S. exports to the Asia-Pacific region has long since passed the amount for Western Europe. This has been true for at least ten years. Second, the gap between Asia and Europe grows wider every year, because the *growth rate* of U.S. exports to the Asia-Pacific region is faster than anywhere else. Third, on a *per capita basis*, the Asian economies—as markets for U.S. products—are well ahead of almost all in Europe.

These and other findings stem from a large international trade database I have constructed, covering the period 1968–88, and encompassing 19 nations in Latin America, 13 in East Asia, and the 12-nation European Community. Based on data in the International Monetary Fund's annual *Direction of*

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Trade Statistics, its purpose is to show how much nations import and from whom.

When trade data are arranged in this way, a number of important comparisons can be made. In the case of Europe, for example, it is possible to compare EC imports from the United States with EC imports from Japan and from the EC itself. This is an interesting exercise, because the high ratio of imports to GNP has given EC members a reputation for import receptivity. When the evidence is looked at more closely, however, it shows that most of Europe's imports come from other EC members—in fact, increasingly so—rather than from the United States, Japan, or anyone else outside the European club.

Again, data relating to Asia shed light on the issue of America's "competitiveness." The case of Singapore suggests the general pattern, and is especially interesting because it is one of the world's most competitive markets. Singapore has high growth, few trade barriers, and more than enough hard currency to import from any source. If U.S. goods can do well there, they have the potential to compete effectively anywhere; and, in fact, U.S. exports have done very well in Singapore. They have risen from only $113 million in 1968 to more than $6 billion in 1988. (This puts Singapore ahead of China, the USSR, India, and any nation in Latin America as an importer of U.S. goods.) Even more important, the growth rate of Singapore's imports from the United States has consistently exceeded its global import growth. This has been true throughout the 1968–88 period.

These comparisons, and others that will be shown, bear on the current public debate over "competitiveness." There have been many warnings that American industries have lost their international edge, and, more broadly, that the United States is now experiencing a general "economic decline." But a close examination of America's trade, and especially its export performance, gives no support to that view. One good measure is the remarkably stable rank of the United States as a world exporter: it accounted for 12 percent of total world exports in 1978, and approximately the same in 1988. That means the United States is often the world's leading exporter, generally see-sawing with Germany for first place. In 1989 the United States was again the world leader—as the result of a 13 percent rise in its exports that year, and a striking 27 percent increase in 1988. Germany and Japan, in contrast, had export growth rates less than half that.[1]

Three lessons flow from the evident stability of the American share of world exports. First, it indicates far less change in America's global economic status than is widely thought, and certainly much less than the declinists warn. Second, in a period marked by such strong growth in overall world trade, the steady American share means that the United States has at least kept pace with global export growth. Third, considering the remarkable rise of the four Asian NICs (newly industrializing countries)—Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong—as exporters of manufactured goods in recent years, the constant U.S. record is especially noteworthy.

After all, these four countries were insignificant world economic actors only twenty years ago. Today—with combined exports of almost $190 billion—they account for about 7 percent of the world's total, more than either Britain or France.[2] Against that background, the ability of U.S. exports to hold their market share signifies an impressive adjustment to changing—and challenging—circumstances. American companies have created new or different products, or found new markets, or done something else to avoid losing market shares to powerful new competitors.

[1]These estimates are based on 1989 data from the *Annual Report of the President on the Trade Agreements Program*.

[2]That also represents about two-thirds of the U.S. share. (In calculating NIC exports, I have included only Hong Kong's domestic exports, i.e., not its much larger re-exports.)

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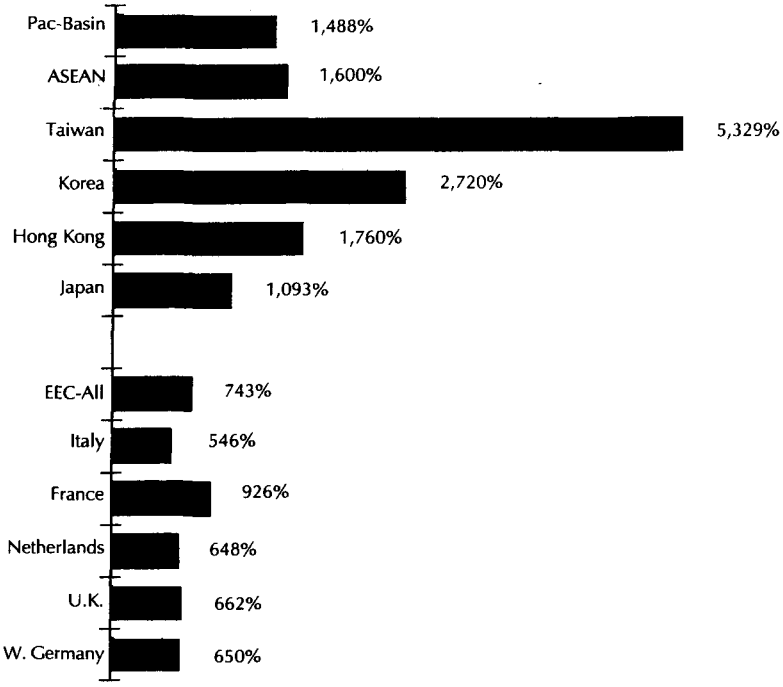
Figure 1
U.S. Export Growth To Asia and Europe, 1968–88



II

THE STABILITY of America's share of world exports should not mask what *has* been changing. The major shift is that the economies of the Asia-Pacific region have become the largest importers of American goods. While those nations are in the news every day as exporters to the United States—generally in connection with worries about the U.S. trade deficit—their role as *importers* is given much less attention. In fact, their place as America's principal overseas customers makes nonsense of the charge that the Asian economies are a threat to America's economic well-being.

A comparison of Europe and Asia as purchasers of American goods over the past twenty years shows that in 1968, the EC countries were larger purchasers of American goods than the Asian economies. In that year, EC imports from the United States were $9.33 billion—nearly one-third more than the Asia-Pacific level of $6.58 billion.[3] By 1980, the Asian economies had caught up, and the Asian market has been larger every year since. In 1988, the difference alone was $25 billion: $104 billion in exports to the Pacific, and just under $80 billion to the EC.

That $25 billion gap will grow wider every year because American imports in the Pacific region have been rising at a far higher rate than in Europe. From 1968–88, as Figure 1 shows, they rose by 1,488 percent, almost exactly double the EC level of 743 percent. In no European nation did the growth rate equal those in Asia, and only France came close to the slowest of the Asian growth rates (Japan).

This means that Asia's eclipse of Europe as America's largest and fastest-growing market is a solidly grounded and long-term de-

[3]The term East Asia or Asia-Pacific refers here to Japan, China, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, and the ASEAN nations (Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, and most recently Brunei).

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velopment. It is not an aberration tied to any one Asia-Pacific nation nor the result of only one short interval. It is instead a fundamental characteristic of today's environment. A comparison of the performance of Germany and Japan brings this home, especially as Japan is widely regarded as hostile to U.S. products while Germany has no such reputation. The reality is that Japan is much the greater importer of American goods. In 1988, Japan's purchases from the United States were $42 billion, compared with $16 billion by Germany. And like the gap between Asia and Europe generally, this too widens every year.

The disparity is not simply the result of Germany's smaller population, which at 60 million is almost exactly half of Japan's 122 million. Germany's imports from the United States are *proportionately* much lower than Japan's, a fact that emerges most clearly when German and Japanese imports from the United States are compared on a per capita basis. In 1988, based on IMF import statistics, Japan's per capita imports from the United States were $344, while Germany's were $272. That is a substantial difference, and it reinforces the significance of Japan's absolute U.S. import margin over Germany.

Such per capita comparisons correct for these important differences in population size. They help clarify which nations are generally receptive to U.S. exports, and which have more of a protectionist reputation than they warrant. For example, assume two nations comparable in wealth and industrialization, except that A imports twice as much from the United States as B. Is B's "poorer" performance the result of protectionism, or does it instead reflect the fact that it has one-quarter A's population? Even if B's people are equally receptive to American goods, there is little they can do to equal A's level. If they also happen to produce items wanted in the enormous American market, they will quickly find themselves enjoying a trade surplus with the United States. Denmark, Finland, and Singapore consistently fall into that category. In 1989, the United States had a $9 million trade deficit even with tiny Monaco—best known for its postage stamps and casinos. But since Monaco's entire population is smaller than the number of American philatelists, a favorable trade balance with the United States would be assured even if it sold nothing to Americans but postage stamps and casino chips.

Aside from demonstrating that Japan is a more significant importer than Germany, Japan's $344 in per capita purchases from the United States also highlights a point of major importance in U.S.-Japan trade. It means that in per capita terms, *Japan's imports from the United States are very close to America's imports from Japan.* The comparable U.S. figure in 1988 (America's per capita imports from Japan) was $378. Preliminary figures from the Department of Commerce indicate that this $34 gap—already small—is likely to have been halved in 1989. A dispassionate observer might consider it a distinction without much difference. He might even conclude that if two such wealthy and industrialized peoples buy roughly the same per capita amounts from one another, their relationship is mutually advantageous.

Yet that is hardly the way the U.S.-Japan economic relationship is usually represented. The emphasis is almost always on the "national" U.S. trade deficit. We should be clear what that means. A focus on "*America's* trade deficit," and "*Japan's* trade surplus," evokes an image of the two nations as if they were two export-import firms. That imagery harks back to the days of mercantilism—when the state or its chartered companies did mostly account for a nation's foreign trade—but it fits no contemporary reality. The president of the United States is no more America's chief purchasing officer than Japan's prime minister is his nation's chief bookkeeper.

That is why it is important to look at bilateral trade relationships in per capita terms, as in Figure 2. It shows first how much the "average" American imported from the United States' major partners in 1988, and then how much the average citizen of those nations imported from the United States that year. Its figures paint a picture of America's

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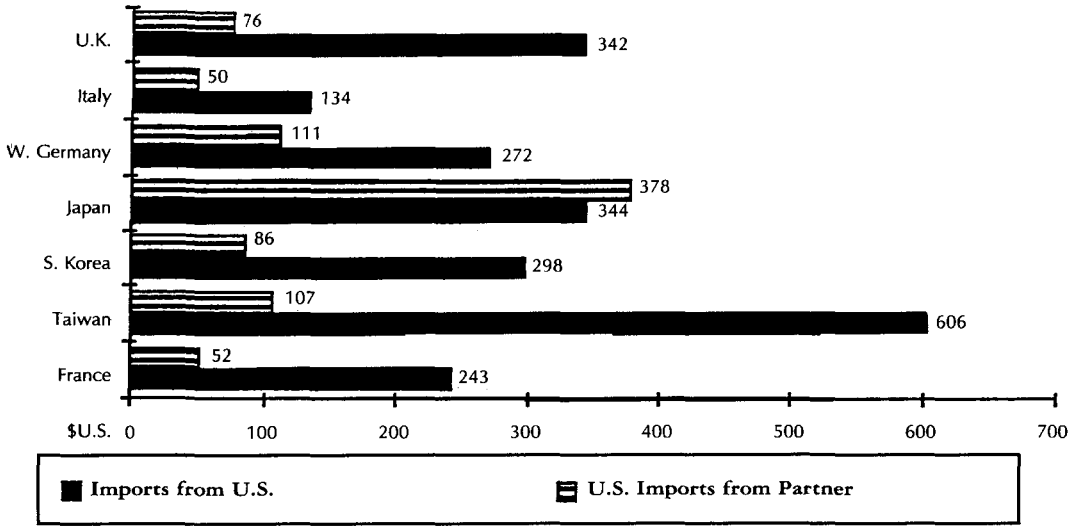
Figure 2
Per Capita U.S. Trade w/Major Partners, 1988



trade with its main overseas partners much different than the usual portrayal. They show that on a per capita basis, it is the United States and not its trading partners that sells much and buys little. The only exception is with Japan, and even that relationship is close to balance. In all the others, the per capita trade disparities strongly favor the United States.[4]

These bilateral disparities also shed new light on the perennial issues of "fairness" and "equity" in the trade debate. It is usually Americans who raise those issues—generally with the complaint that trade is not conducted on a level playing field. There is plenty to support that case, especially in the realms of agricultural subsidies, intellectual property, and the service industries. Nevertheless, the bilateral per capita import figures suggest that the "equity" argument could be turned on its head by America's trade partners themselves. They could insist that in order to balance the per capita disparities so strongly favoring the United States today, Americans should buy more from them. Even Japan could make that case: with U.S.-Japan per capita import figures now so similar, and with a 20 percent higher real income in the United States, Japanese could argue that "fairness" demands that Americans import more.[5]

The broader significance of these bilateral comparisons is to reinforce, in per capita terms, what we have already seen in absolute values: that America has far larger and stronger markets in Asia than in Europe. The pattern first seen in connection with Japan and Germany, where the per capita data showed that Japan's margin was not simply the result of its larger population, continues across the board. Compare the figures for Taiwan, Japan, and Korea—$606, $344, and $298 respectively—with those for Germany, France, and Italy—$272, $243, and $134. Only Britain, with $342 in per capita imports from the United States, is comparable to Japan among the major European trade partners.

This trade gap between Asia and Europe is starkly illustrated by a twenty-year comparison of U.S. exports to France, Korea, and

[4]Taiwan's $606 in per capita imports from the United States is a truly astounding amount—so astounding that some have thought it an aberration. The reason generally accepted was a very large purchase of gold bullion from the United States in 1988. Yet preliminary 1989 data shows Taiwan's per capita U.S. imports holding at almost the same level—about $595.

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Taiwan. I have chosen those three countries for two reasons: first, because each now imports roughly the same amount from the United States (about $13 billion annually); second, because the French record is itself so impressive. (As Figure 1 showed, French imports from the United States rose tenfold from 1968–88, the best performance in Europe.) In 1968 France's U.S. imports were more than $1.3 *billion*, while Korea's were just a third of that at $452 million, and Taiwan's only $240 million. Yet by 1988 the two Asian countries were nearly even with France's $13.5 billion, and preliminary figures suggest that both probably surpassed France in 1989. This record is all the more remarkable considering that France is a larger and much wealthier nation. Its population is 56 million, compared with 43 million in South Korea, and only 20 million in Taiwan. Moreover, French per capita income is double Taiwan's and three times larger than Korea's.

These and other data, showing the true dimensions and directions of America's foreign trade, are not particularly difficult to obtain. But the patterns pointed to here are seldom noted by American commentators, and are sometimes specifically denied—suggesting that predispositions and a political agenda shape much of what is being said and written about American trade policy. A good example came recently in connection with Taiwan—which, with only 20 million people, is now America's *sixth largest market*. Instead of recording this striking fact, Clyde Prestowitz and Selig Harrison, writing in the Summer 1990 issue of *Foreign Policy*, advanced the extraordinary opinion that the United States should "begin to extricate itself from the unresolved conflict between China and Taiwan. . . . *The island's population of 20 million is too small to be a significant market* [emphasis added]."

III

ONE WAY OF belittling the significance of the numbers, when they are acknowledged, is to argue that what counts is not just market size, but the *composition* of America's exports. Many suspect that while Asians may now indeed be importing "more" from the United States, they are buying mainly its agricultural commodities and raw materials, rather than its manufactured goods. But that view too is simply unfounded today. Like so much else in America's misunderstanding of Asia's economic significance, this misconception probably stems from experience with Japan.

Until very recently, the trade dialogue with Tokyo was shaped almost entirely by arguments over agricultural commodities. The best-known cases are those about beef, rice, soybeans, oranges, and apples. In the case of rice, Japan imposed a near-total ban on its import. A forest products dispute is another recent example: the United States has complained that Japan has been willing to buy plenty of American timber, but not its more highly processed (and value-added) wood-based products. While there has been progress in most of these cases, it has been a hard-fought and slow process, and the experience has strongly shaped the American view that, to the Japanese, the United States is one big farm.

The facts are dramatically different. There probably has been no better-kept secret in U.S.-Japan relations, at least not since Pearl Harbor, than the true nature of what Japan actually buys from the United States: *Since 1983, 50 percent of American exports to Japan have been manufactured products, and since 1986 the ratio has been 60 percent*. The trend is firmly upward—both for U.S. exports in general, and for its manufactured products in particular. We should be clear what this 60

[5]Some argue that Japan has a higher per capita income than the United States, but this is an altogether artificial result of converting Japan's yen-denominated GNP into today's weak dollar. The outcome is a Japanese per capita GNP of more than $21,500. That is several thousand dollars higher than the U.S. figure, and bears little relationship to Japan's standard of living or purchasing power parity. Its principal use is to frighten Americans.

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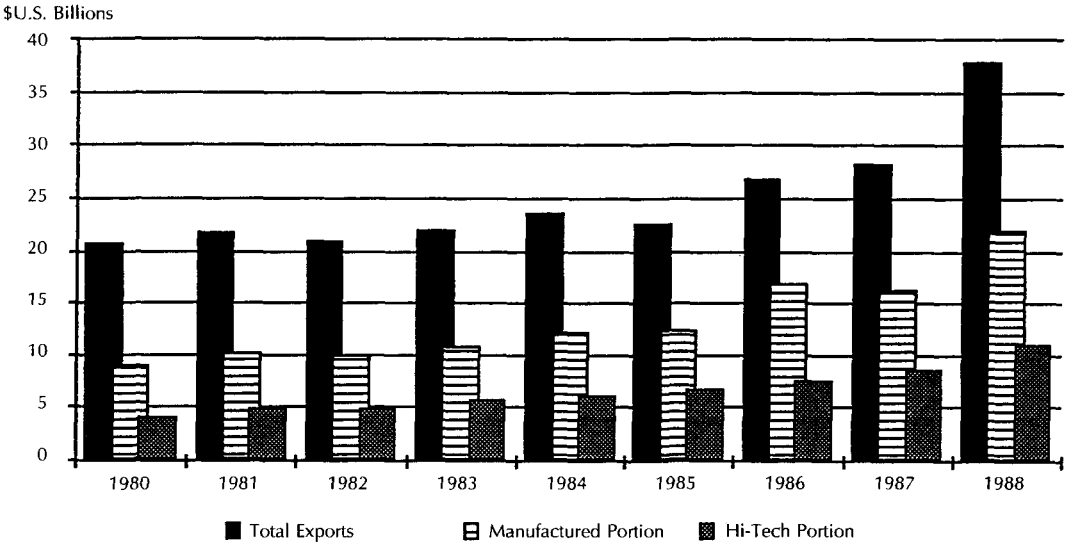
Figure 3

U.S. Exports to Japan 1980–88: Total, Manufactured, and Hi-Tech



Data from U.S. Commerce Department

percent ratio represents: it means that in 1988, Japan bought almost $22 billion in manufactured goods from the United States—an amount higher than Germany and France *combined.* Most surprising of all, about half of those rising U.S. manufactured exports to Japan are "hi-tech" products—so designated not by Japan, but by the U.S. government.[6] As Figure 3 shows, America's hi-tech products regularly represent at least half of U.S. manufactured exports to Japan. In 1988, that meant almost $11 billion in U.S. hi-tech sales to Japan.

Moreover, the four East Asian NICs bought even more—$11.5 billion—for a combined Japan/NIC hi-tech total of more than $22 billion. How does this Asian performance compare with the EC? And how does it compare with Latin America—which some continue to call America's "natural market"—as a customer for U.S. hi-tech products?

Latin America, with hi-tech imports of $11.8 billion in 1988, can be disposed of quickly. The four East Asian NICs alone, with a population of 72 million, imported almost as much in U.S. hi-tech products as the 442 million people in the entire Western Hemisphere south of the Rio Grande.

The European Community, on the other hand, accounted for $34 billion in hi-tech purchases from the United States in 1988—much more than the Japan/NIC figure of $22 billion. But the EC is also a market of 320 million people, 125 million larger than Japan and the NICs combined. That means that in per capita terms the East Asians did better: $115 in 1988, compared with $106 for the generally much wealthier Western Europeans. And that gap too is widening because of East Asia's much higher growth rates for

[6]The Commerce Department's list includes ten product-categories as "hi-tech" items: "communications equipment and electronic components; aircraft, engines and parts; professional & scientific instruments; office & ADP machines; engines, turbines & parts; drugs & medicines; guided missiles, spacecraft & parts; industrial inorganic chemicals; ordinance & accessories; plastic materials; synthetic resins, rubber & fibers" (U.S. Department of Commerce, *United States Trade Performance in 1987,* 1988, Table 3.2, p. 19).

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hi-tech imports from the United States. In Japan they rose by 132 percent from 1981–88; in the four NICs by 165 percent; and in the EC by just 85 percent.

In every respect, therefore—whether long-term market growth, overall market size and composition, or in per capita terms—it is the Asia-Pacific economies that represent the best prospects for America's exports, today and for years to come. This does not mean that U.S. trade and export efforts should slight Western Europe, Latin America, or even Eastern Europe. It does mean that in both the private sector and in government, U.S. trade behavior will have to reflect the reality of East Asia's primacy. To achieve that recognition, however, it will be necessary to move away from thought and behavior patterns rooted in the past and often grounded in myth. Of those myths, none is more persistent than the view that for reasons of history, culture, or habit, Western Europe remains America's most important market. As we have seen, that has not been true for a decade. Recall again that although in 1968 the Pacific Basin was a much smaller U.S. market than Europe, by 1988 it was $25 billion larger.

A large part of the explanation is that Western Europe's imports have changed significantly since 1968, with two developments being particularly dramatic. The first development is the clear fall-off in Western European imports from the United States—from almost 11 percent of total European imports in 1968 to just over 7 percent in all recent years. The second development is even more telling, especially in the light of plans for EC–92: Intra-European imports, already 46 percent in 1968, have steadily risen since then. By 1988, 57 percent of EC imports were from the EC itself.

It seems obvious that both patterns will intensify after 1992, when Europe's plans for full-scale economic integration become fact. After all, those plans are designed to eliminate all remaining barriers to intra-European trade. Since 57 percent of all EC imports are from within the EC itself, even without that final integration, a further rise—to two-thirds or even 75 percent—has to be anticipated. For the United States, and for other non-European major industrialized exporters as well, that is not an encouraging prospect.

Much the same decline in America's market share has taken place in South America, and began well before the Latin American debt crisis. South America's imports from the United States were more than 37 percent of the total in 1968, but have dropped steadily since then: to 27.5 percent in 1988 (in Brazil the fall was from 32 percent to just over 20 percent). The contrast with the Pacific region—either all or any of its parts—is striking. The share represented by imports from the United States has either expanded or remained steady, but it has not dropped in any recent years. And because both the overall economies and imports of the Asian region have been growing faster than anywhere else, even a stable U.S. import share has meant that American firms have experienced dramatic export increases throughout East Asia.

IV

SINCE THE fall of the Berlin Wall, American businessmen have rushed optimistically to Eastern Europe—this, despite the small size and poverty of its economies and the likelihood that they will be far more quickly and effectively exploited by the Germans, Italians, and French. Yet no such enthusiasm attends official or unofficial views of our already vast and growing markets in the Pacific rim.[7]

[7]The Japanese have been much more clear headed about Eastern Europe. As Kazuo Nukazawa, the Japanese business community's chief economist, put it recently, "The commercial prospects are not too promising. . . .Although there are approximately 120 million people in Eastern Europe, the size of the market is much smaller for us than the South Korean or Taiwanese markets" (*Japan Economic Survey*, May, 1990, p. 11).

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Americans need to recognize the likely consequences of their continued depreciation of the Asia-Pacific market. It means the United States will be expending its trade energies in the wrong places. While Europe tightens its intra-regional trade, and Japanese firms augment their place in the rich and rapidly growing East Asian economies, the United States may be left—aside from Canada—with the relative crumbs at the global dinner table. Washington's new interest in a "Western Hemisphere" Free Trade Area (FTA) illustrates this misplaced emphasis. President Bush has called for a free trade arrangement with Mexico, and several countries in South America—most recently Chile—have expressed their interest. There is nothing inherently wrong with the idea, particularly if it means integrating Mexico with the already-established U.S.-Canada FTA. But a Western Hemisphere proposal is nonetheless likely to divert attention and energies from building on America's already more intensive trade ties with East Asia.

This is not to suggest that our Asian trading partners are as open as they should be. There is plenty of fault on the Asian side, where limits persist in precisely those sectors—such as construction, banking, software, home-building equipment, and insurance—where U.S. firms are among the world's most competitive. But there is fault, too, on the American side because of the image, quickly picked up in Congress and the press, that the East Asians only sell to America and do not buy what we want to sell.

The evidence presented here demonstrates how short that image falls from the truth. Yet the myth persists and it has already done great damage to the critical U.S.-Japan relationship. Americans routinely now refer to Japan as a threat and adversary, and as long-time Japan watcher Ronald Dore put it recently, the Japanese "are getting fed up." They are beginning to ask how long should they continue to ignore the widening American view that Tokyo is America's new enemy. Questions like that go to the heart of Asian peace and stability, and threaten to open a Pandora's box best kept shut.

The way to keep it closed is to begin real work on the Pacific-region Free Trade Area proposals. Bilateral arrangements, initially with Taiwan, Korea, and Japan, should be explored first. U.S.-ASEAN arrangements have also been suggested, and preliminary studies suggest mutual advantages. There are also important broader possibilities, of which the most recent manifestation was the Canberra meeting late last year of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation). The United States was represented by Secretary of State James Baker, who called it "an idea whose time has come."

Pacific-region free trade proposals have been criticized as too difficult to achieve because of the wide differences in levels of income and development between the United States and several Asian economies. But no such obstacle has been raised, for example, in the path of exploring the U.S.-Mexico arrangement. The reason, of course, is that the White House wants it. The same reasoning needs now to be applied in the Pacific region, where the benefits will be even greater, and where the dangers to America's interests, both in politics and economics, are no less threatening.

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Europe's Muslims

Anthony Hartley

DURING THE weekend of July 14–15, 1990, a conference, called together by the Muslim Institute—a body representing some of the more fervent Muslims residing in Britain—met in London. The director, Dr. Kalim Siddiqui, a controversial figure, presented to the meeting a document entitled "The Muslim Manifesto—A Strategy for Survival." The purpose of this document was to provide "a common text defining the Muslim situation in Britain. It also seeks to provide a framework for a healthy growth of all parts of the community as well as a common Muslim identity and purpose." By implicitly describing Muslims in Britain as a threatened species, the subtitle of the Manifesto set its tone, and Dr. Siddiqui's speech introducing it was equally uncompromising:

> We are an autonomous community, capable of setting our own goals and priorities in domestic and foreign relationships.

And still more forcefully:

> We are sick and tired of headmasters and teachers discriminating against our children. We are sick and tired of being told to "free" our women from "slavery." Our women will never be available to become sex slaves of the West. Our message to our tormentors is short and simple—get off our backs.

Anthony Hartley is editor of *Encounter*.

The Manifesto exhorts British Muslims to practice their religion and obey its laws. It calls for the establishment of a Council and General Assembly of British Muslims and rejects the idea of integration into British society. Finally, it contains an "agenda" for British Muslims—a list of subjects likely to be of importance to them in the future. These include a new legal status for Islam in Britain, including an extension of the law on blasphemy, Islamic proselytism in Britain, Islamic schools, and the possibility of an Islamic university.

The Muslim Institute is believed to be under Iranian influence (indeed, Dr. Siddiqui has acknowledged his own "special relationship" with Iran), and it might be doubted whether its followers are the majority or even a considerable proportion of British Muslims. The Manifesto has been attacked by Dr. Hesham el Essawy, head of the Islamic Society for Religious Tolerance, as being likely to play into the hands of "racists." Moreover, its excitable rhetoric has to be taken with a pinch of salt. Does Dr. Siddiqui really want to give up his vote in British elections, which is what his attitude would seem to imply? Nonetheless, there is little doubt that some of the questions raised in the Manifesto accurately reflect areas of friction between Muslim immigrants and the society which they have adopted—particularly in matters concerning religious observance, education, and sexual morality. Muslim parents fear that their au-

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thority over their children will wane as their children encounter, at school or through the media, the norms of Western life. Undoubtedly, this is a potentially explosive sociological situation—Islam's religious content makes it that—and it is hardly surprising that it should lead to reactions that are over emotional or appear to bring British Muslims into conflict with society at large.

One such incident was brought about by the publication of Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, in which Islam and the Prophet were satirized in a manner offensive to Muslims. After the Ayatollah Khomeini's sentence (*fatwa*) condemning Rushdie to death and the burning of his book by Bradford Muslims, it was Dr. Siddiqui who, at a meeting of Muslims in Manchester, asked those of his audience who approved the *fatwa* to raise their hands. Most did so. The episode was followed by calls for Dr. Siddiqui's prosecution for incitement to violence, but the matter was allowed to drop.

The Rushdie affair, accompanied as it was by bombings of bookshops, drew the attention of the British political class and educated public to the problems and paradoxes accompanying the existence of a substantial Muslim minority in their midst. At the same time it began to be apparent that Britain was not alone in such difficulties. A steady flow of immigration from the Indian subcontinent, Malaysia, the Middle East, and Africa, both north and south of the Sahara, is affecting all European countries. This movement has been caused by the desire for a higher standard of living on the part of the immigrants and by Europe's need for cheap labor.

In the 1980s, however, with unemployment running at higher levels in Western Europe and the prospect of East Germans replacing Turkish *gastarbeiter* (migrant workers) in the Federal Republic of Germany, increasing restrictions have been placed on immigration and work permits. No doubt, however, this movement of population still continues, since control is hard to exercise and will probably become still more difficult when frontier checks between European Community states diminish further after 1992. (France, Germany, and Benelux have already abolished them.)[1]

The Main Concentrations

MUSLIM communities in European countries differ in numbers, countries of origin, and types of employment. Likewise their impact on the host societies has varied according to the traditions and the political and legal structures of the countries concerned. Different local situations have engendered diverging political and social aspirations. Institutions offer differing levels of opportunities for Muslims to fit into communities, and conflicts can arise over a wide range of issues.

In Britain, the number of Muslims is variously estimated as between 1 million and 1.5 million; though, in the absence of any religious census and the fact that many have arrived illegally, there is no accurate count. They come mostly from the Indian subcontinent (Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan), but there are also East African Asians, Arabs, Malaysians, and Nigerians. The majority have collected in the centers of northern industrial cities (Birmingham, Leeds, Bradford) and in the East End of London in the garment districts once occupied by Jewish immigrants. Their jobs are mostly unskilled, though, surprisingly, there is also a higher proportion of Muslims in professional occupations than is the case with the population as a whole: based on 1981 census figures, 15.4 percent of Muslim men had managerial jobs (national figure, 6.5 percent).

These communities are served by some 600 mosques, the most important of which have been built with donations from the Middle East. Saudi Arabia appears to be the

[1]It is interesting—and perhaps indicative of trouble to come—that France should recently have protested to Bonn about what seemed to be German encouragement for the emigration to France of surplus Turkish workers.

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largest donor and has also exercised considerable influence on the appointment of Imams (prayer leaders). The next largest donor is Libya. The mosques, in addition to their religious function, organize Koranic teaching for children (i.e., instruction in Arabic for Urdu-speaking Asians) and generally act as a center for the communities in which they are located.

One characteristic of the status of British Muslims, which is significantly different from what is to be found in other European countries, is the fact that, since most of them were originally immigrants from Commonwealth countries, they are citizens and have the right to vote in local and national elections. This has far-reaching consequences. Despite what "The Muslim Manifesto" may say, these Muslims are integrated into British political life, and a number of them hold political office—something that gives them considerable potential leverage to realize specific objectives. The practical results of this and the issues it raises for British politicians will be discussed later.

IN FRANCE, as might be expected given its geographical position and historic ties with the Maghreb, there is a still larger Muslim population: estimated to be between 2.5 and 3 million. These are mostly Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians, but there are also some Turks and an increasing number of Muslim Africans from countries like Senegal, Mali, and Niger. The Muslim communities are concentrated in the industrial areas of France, particularly in the north and in the suburbs of Paris. There are well over a thousand mosques or "prayer rooms" where Islam is practiced. Around these, and often as part of the struggle to obtain a place of worship on housing estates or in factories, have grown Muslim groupings, whose general aim is to improve the immigrants' lot. Sometimes these have merged into wider social or political movements such as "SOS Racisme" or the "March of the *beurs* (Arabs)," whose effect has been to end temporarily the isolation of Muslim communities and bring them into French political life. Since many Muslims work in factories—especially in the big automobile plants around Paris—strikes in those industries have been accompanied by efforts on the part of the communist Confédération Générale du Travail to organize Muslim workers, while making accusations that the leaders of a rival "company" union had broken the Ramadan fast.

Most French Muslims do not have the right to vote, though this is changing as young people, born in France, grow up as French citizens. This gradual formation of a Muslim electorate will facilitate the acceptance of demands voiced by the Muslim community—as, for example, the letter sent by the Union islamique en France to headmasters asking for an end to mixed classes. But the integration of Muslims into French political life will be a slow process and one which must involve a greater degree of cultural integration than would be welcomed by many Muslims. The controversy about the three Muslim girls in the town of Creil who wore head-scarves to school, thereby offending against the cherished principles of the *école laïque*, shows how difficult it is for a secular state to deal with Islamic activism. (The controversy ended with the minister of education, Lionel Jespin, a Socialist, giving way—much to the dismay of partisans of secular education and a unitary state.)

French Muslims have looked with some envy toward Belgium, which has given its Muslim community a distinct legal status by creating a Supreme Council for the Muslim religion. Recently, France's interior minister, Pierre Joxe, took the first step toward a similar solution by establishing an advisory council whose task will be to prepare the regulations for a consultative council of the Muslim community. Such a body would at least help the French government ascertain what Muslims really want. At present, in a medley of competing sects and rival influences from Muslim states, their aspirations remain problematic.

In what was until recently West Germany, according to the *Islam-Archives-*

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Deutschland, there are 1.9 million Muslims. Of these the great majority are Turkish (1.4 million) with considerable numbers of Arabs (130,000) and Bosnian Muslims (100,000). They have at their disposal nearly 900 mosques. Again, most of them live in the industrial areas of big cities or in city centers—the Kreuzberg area of West Berlin is the best known of these districts of Turkish settlement. These immigrants have the status of migrant workers; they do heavy or menial manual work, and are, to a considerable degree, at the mercy of economic circumstances (which now include competition of labor from the East). Some of them by now have wives and families with them. There are also close ties with families in their homelands. Remittances back to Turkey ran at DM 3.35 billion a year between 1981 and 1984. Relations with immigrants in matters such as education and social services are the responsibility of the regions (*Länder*), which work out their own solutions to problems. The Senate of West Berlin, for example, agreed with the Turkish government to pay for two hours of Islamic instruction per week for Turkish children.[2]

The Muslim workers in Germany have no vote and little political power. Though some 50,000 of them have become German citizens, this process is only at its beginning and goes ahead slowly. A considerable part of the Muslim community is drawn together by the Islamic Council for the Federal Republic. Most political activity among German Muslims, however, reflects the political attitudes of their country of origin. In the liberal atmosphere of the Federal Republic, Turkish Islamic zealots can find more tolerance and freedom of expression for their views than exist in Turkey itself. The *süleymanci* movement, for instance, a politico-religious party arising from a mystical confraternity of a type familiar in Turkish Islam, thrives in Germany, but is frowned on by the Turkish state.

Italy is also a host country for many Muslims, most of them from the other side of the Mediterranean—Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. Since the great majority of these are illegal immigrants—the use of tourist visas to enter the country is widespread among intending immigrants—figures are uncertain, but the Italian authorities put the number at 1.7 million. Their installation does not seem to have caused much trouble, though there is a growing movement behind the slogan "Jobs for Italians first!" However, in southern Italy and Sicily there have always been interchanges with North Africa, and so far the only notable crisis—apart from the incidence of assassinations inseparable from the pursuit of Middle Eastern politics in European capitals—has been worry as to whether the building of a mosque in Rome infringed the Lateran Treaty. Apart from the four major concentrations, Belgium and the Netherlands also have significant Muslim minorities. In Belgium they number 200,000 North Africans and Turks; in the Netherlands, there are 285,000 Turks, Moroccans, and Surinamese.

Muslim Demands

AS THIS brief overview indicates, the considerable Muslim community in Western Europe contains much diversity—above all in countries of origin and political status—but its peculiar requirements, as it inserts itself into Western industrial society, and, hence, the difficulties that arise between it and its hosts, are not dissimilar. These concern the practice of Islam, the bringing up of families in the Islamic faith, and anxiety lest social conditions in Europe

[2]This agreement, however, has led to a paradoxical form of religious instruction. Since the teachers are supplied by the Turkish government and Kemalism has made Turkey a secular state, this course in Islamic studies largely consists of the repetition of phrases like "My fatherland is Turkey. I love Turkey more than my life." See Tomas Gerholm and Yngve Georg Lithman, eds., *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe* (London: Mansell, 1988).

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should undermine Muslim morality and separate child from parent.

All over Europe Muslims have demanded places to pray at work, in workers' hostels, and on housing estates; the provision of *Halal* food (food that accords with the prescriptions laid down in the Koran) in canteens and schools; time off to celebrate Muslim holidays (the two great festivals *Aid al kabir* and *Aid al saghir*); and the right to attend the mosque on Friday.

Many of these requirements are not easy to meet. The Ramadan fast—which involves not eating from sunrise to sunset for a whole month—may diminish the physical capacity of workers doing heavy manual labor, and absences during the day to pray are not easily compatible with the rhythms of modern industrial production. Islamic burial, which requires a corpse to be laid on its side facing Mecca, is difficult to arrange in crowded urban cemeteries. Young Muslims, during their life in Western society, are liable to encounter—and perhaps even acquire a taste for—alcohol, tobacco, and "unclean" food. For religious Muslims, everyday life in European cities is full of temptations that can lure the young away from Islam.

This preoccupation with the possible secularization of young Muslims is, of course, at its most sensitive when it comes to public education. It is no accident that a clash between Muslims and the French state should have taken place in this precise area. The surrender by the French minister of education to the girls of Creil is highly significant, a breach in French educational doctrine which was never conceded to France's Catholics. Moreover, it was a recognition of the principle of female segregation which runs contrary to that of equality of the sexes, now so firmly and, one might say in some cases, so fanatically established in the Western consciousness and practice.

Demands about schools put forward by Muslim parents in Britain include the adoption of Islamic dress by girls, segregated swimming and physical education classes, *Halal* food to be provided at school meals, the availability of "prayer rooms," and time off for visits to the mosque and Islamic festivals. It is at the mosque that children will receive their Koranic instruction. There is also deep disquiet among Muslims about sex education in schools, particularly about homosexuality. Similar demands were contained in the letter to French headmasters mentioned previously.

However, the situations in Britain and France differ in an essential respect. In France such decisions depend on the minister of education who rules a centralized school system. In Britain they are the responsibility of the local authorities. Moreover, a new British education act has given parents greater power over schools and introduced the possibility, if they so desire, of a school "opting out" of the local authority system. In a heavily Muslim area, therefore, the possibility now exists of Muslim governors and parents controlling the school and changing its workings in accordance with their own needs and beliefs. Private Muslim schools have also appeared and are seeking government grants in the same way that Anglicans, Catholics, and Jews have done before them.

Such possibilities pose difficult questions of principle for any British government. How can Whitehall refuse to Muslim schools subsidies which it gives to other religious groups? Why should a Muslim private school not become "grant-aided"? In state schools with a majority of Muslim pupils what is to happen to the non-Muslim minority? The rise of a specifically Muslim educational sector would institutionalize and perpetuate a barrier between Muslim immigrants and the rest of society which government policy has hitherto sought to overcome. To which it could be, and has been, answered that the discipline inculcated by Islam is a valuable asset for a country and that it is better for Muslim youth to be subjected to traditional forces of social control than to be left to its own devices. If Muslims do not want to integrate into Western societies, should they be forced to do so?

Here the responses given in Britain and France might be very different, reflecting very different conceptions of the state and its

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functions. It is significant that, in its dealings with the Muslim community over education, the French state was forced to abandon a general principle. In Britain, on the other hand, a looser structure of administration creates dilemmas which, though acute, remain local. But, whatever the response of the host country, immigrants who, for religious reasons, wish to remain distinct from the mass of the population pose one particularly fundamental problem: that of allegiance.

Loyal to Whom?

ONE ASPECT of the Muslim communities in Western Europe which must be disquieting to governments is the influence exercised on them by Muslim states and sects in Asia and Africa. This is more fundamental than a mere importation of murderous feuding onto the streets of European cities, though this admittedly gives a good deal of trouble to police forces. Religious and political movements originating in Islamic countries from Malaysia to the Maghreb are also reflected in Muslim communities in Europe. The channels through which such influences travel are not well known. New immigrants, broadcasts, films, books, newspapers, tapes, videos, Imams sent out to man newly constructed mosques—messages from the Islamic world come in a variety of guises. (Western security services, lacking Arabic- or Urdu-speaking officers, are, it appears, none too well informed even about the content of the addresses given in the mosques.) However these channels work, the existence of such ties seems certain, as the evolution of opinion and political events in the Muslim world have their repercussions in Europe.

Sometimes there is a clear institutional channel of influence. In France, for instance, the Great Mosque in Paris is now directly under the control of the Algerian government, following a long and complicated dispute about who should appoint its rector. For a long time after Algerian independence, the mosque had remained under the leadership of Si Hamza Boubakeur, a nominee of the French government in its imperial days. Now, however, he has been replaced by Cheikh Abbas, an official of the Algerian Ministry of Education. His tenure has seen a reconciliation between the Algerian state and the associations of *harkis* in France as well as the "re-islamization" of the latter.[3] Backed by a number of Muslim communities, the Great Mosque has intervened on numerous issues affecting Muslims in France: custody of children in divorce cases concerning mixed marriages, immigration laws, relations between young Muslims and the police, etc. In other words, as Gilles Kepel, the foremost authority on Muslims in France, points out in *Les Banlieu l'Islam*, an institution under the aegis of Algiers is playing a part in France's political life—a part that may become more considerable as more French Muslims attain French citizenship.

Similarly, in Great Britain, appointments to the Central London Mosque have been influenced by Saudi Arabia, with results that were felt during the Rushdie affair. In his book, *A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie and the Rage of Islam*, Malise Ruthven, a well-informed observer sympathetic to Islam, comments:

> Dr. al Ghamdi and his colleagues in the Union of Mosques Organisation and the Islamic Council of Europe simultaneously contrived to inflame Muslim opinion and to alienate important sections of the British public by their ill-informed and overheated response to Rushdie's book. Instead of explaining to the Muslim community that their decision to settle in Britain had placed them outside the "protection" of *Dar al Islam* and the writ of the *Shari'a* law, they lent their authority to a campaign which they and their British advisors ought to have known would lead nowhere, since Rushdie had broken no British law.

It is certainly a paradox that Muslim institutions should become a conduit for influence exercised by those who care little for civil order in Britain. Ruthven adds:

[3]The *harkis* are Algerians who fought for France during the Algerian war and had to leave the country when it became independent.

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> Given that the Islamic community is now an established part of the British population, the wisdom of allowing British Muslim institutions to be run by foreign-funded appointees possessing inadequate knowledge of British culture, law or institutions must be questioned.

A rather different type of influence has been that exerted by the example of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. In France, this was followed by an intense agitation excited by followers of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Among Muslim students in the mosques and Koranic schools, work of missionary endeavor and proselytism has gone forward. According to Kepel, the appeal of the Iranian model to young Muslims is clear:

> . . . the humiliation inflicted on the "arrogant" American superpower is a sign: the Western dominance of the universe is not irreversible, battle "in the name of God" can end in tangible earthly success.

The effect of the Iranian Islamic Revolution has been a heightening of Muslim consciousness in Western countries, whose effects range from assassinations and demonstrations to the founding of youth movements and a new impetus given to the building of mosques and the preaching of the Prophet's message. The influence exercised by Saudi money has been replaced by the far more fiery message from Tehran. That message is anti-Western, hostile to modern industrial society in Europe and the United States, and opposed to the integration of Muslims into it.

In Britain, outside sectarian influences played a major part in the inception of the Rushdie affair. Muslims in the United Kingdom seem to have been alerted to the implications of *The Satanic Verses* when the book was banned in India in October 1988 because of the danger of intercommunal riots. In November, the chairman of the Council for Mosques in Bradford, Sher Azam, wrote to the prime minister to protest against the book's publication. Earlier, the Islamic Foundation of Leicester had published its own protest. In this case the impulsion seems to have come from Muslim activists of the Jamaat-i-Islami, a highly politicized reforming sect based in India with links to the Muslim brotherhood in the Middle East. British Muslim reactions to the Rushdie affair were also affected by other events in the Indian subcontinent: the tense state of Muslim opinion in India following a court decision allowing Hindus access to a shrine on whose site a mosque had been built, and feelings among strict Muslims in Pakistan following the choice of a woman, Benazir Bhutto, as prime minister. By the beginning of 1989 an agitation among British Muslims was already under way. This was to be symbolized and given wide publicity by the burning of Rushdie's book at a Bradford demonstration in January. It was only in February that the Ayatollah Khomeini issued his *fatwa* condemning Rushdie as well as those associated with the book's publication and distribution.

The effect of the *fatwa*, apart from putting Salman Rushdie's life in real danger, was to create an obstacle in the path of any reconciliation between Iran and Western countries, which was presumably the intention of the radicals who had submitted the case to the Ayatollah for his judgement. Thus what was to become a difficult political problem in Britain was affected by political opportunism in Iran and Pakistan, and by the reactions of the Muslim minority in India. At present, though relations between Britain and Iran appear to be improving, it looks as if Rushdie will remain a virtual prisoner for the foreseeable future, as the agitation against his book by British Muslims continues. In Mr. Ruthven's words, "The goal of social integration has become significantly more distant for a community whose thrift and industriousness had made it likely to prosper in the free market conditions created by Thatcherism."

The Multicultural Trap

TWO SERIES of consequences stemming from the presence of Muslim communities in Europe—the insertion of Islamic beliefs and mores into a modern industrial setting and the influence exer-

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cised by the Muslim world on European countries—converge in the Rushdie affair. Out of it, however, emerges another problem: the status of religion in a secular society. In the April-June 1990 issue of *Political Quarterly*, Tariq Modood, a Muslim writer, identifies this point as the most salient feature of the Rushdie case:

> The Rushdie affair is not about the life of Salman Rushdie nor freedom of expression, let alone Islamic fundamentalism or book-burning or Iranian interference in British affairs. The issue is of the rights of non-European religious and cultural minorities in the context of a secular hegemony.

For anyone brought up in an Erastian—not to say agnostic—Western tradition, however, such a statement begs more questions than it answers. In fact, it appears as an attempt to obscure issues such as law and order and freedom of speech in an impenetrable smokescreen, in which the only discernible feature is the emotive reference to the "rights" of "non-European religious and cultural minorities." But do these include the right to pursue individual citizens with death threats? And is the evolution of European society toward tolerance over three hundred years to go for nothing? In the sixteenth century anyone taking part in a desecration of the sacraments, such as was recently performed by gay activists in the Catholic cathedral of New York, would have met a lingering and painful death. Nowadays, whatever disgust may be felt concerning such actions, no one is about to burn the perpetrators. In Britain the blasphemy law is a rusty instrument, one rarely used in recent years, and prosecutions under it would probably be thrown out by juries. Now, liberals, opposed to any restriction on the right to publish, find themselves faced with Muslim demands for an extension of that law to protect Islam from insult. Their reply has been to demand the removal of the blasphemy law from the statute book—but this would hardly satisfy Muslims, even though it would put them on an equal footing with their Christian brethren. Indeed, on this and other issues (including religious education in the schools) there have recently been signs of an incipient alliance between British Muslims and some fundamentalist Christians.[4]

Faced with such choices, British liberal opinion has split. Intellectuals are pulled one way by their traditional attachment to free speech and another by their more recently acquired belief in the virtues of a "multicultural" society. That those, toward whom they have done their best to recommend a rational tolerance, should suddenly display violently illiberal feelings strikes at the very heart of a meliorist tradition that descends from the Enlightenment. Of course, their favorable view of a "multicultural" society depended on picking and choosing among the cultural elements composing it. Such phenomena as the infliction of the death penalty for apostasy or the social subjection of women were not considered as being "rich" or "exciting," and it came as a shock to find that Islam had to be accepted as a whole. The Rushdie episode has been part of the dissolution of the liberal consensus in Britain, and it may have served a useful purpose if it brings home the message that "multiculturalism" is only possible if it means embracing the (to modern European eyes) bad features of alien cultures as well as the good. The phrase itself is a hypocritical way of avoiding this conclusion.

France and other European countries have not yet had their Rushdie. But sooner or later a similar incident will almost certainly set off much the same train of events. The problem of Muslim communities is now posed for European governments and peoples. Is Islam to be given a special status, which carries with it immunity from criticism, let alone satire? Are the children of Muslim immigrants to integrate fully into the societies which their parents have chosen? Clearly it must be the aim of religious leaders, taking the view they do of Western behavior, to prevent this, to guard their young people with a ring fence of prohibitions and exhor-

[4]See S.P.D. Green, "Beyond the Satanic Verses," *Encounter* (June, 1990).

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tations. But can they reasonably expect that the secular states in which they find themselves will aid them in this task? Can they also expect that, if tensions continue—which seems probable—Western countries will go on allowing preachers in mosques to indulge themselves in violent and abusive rhetoric? Can Islam expect to be above the law or to apply its own laws in European societies?

For what the spokesmen for Islamic communities in Europe appear to be demanding are additional rights over and above those they receive as citizens of their adopted countries. Dr. Siddiqui, for example, does not contemplate abandoning his right to vote in British elections. Nonetheless he wants other privileges which express the separateness of his community as Muslims. The girls of Creil are not leaving France's school system; in effect they have imposed their own terms on it. But this claim to a "special position" in European society could cut both ways. If Muslims succeed in remaining "apart" in, say, the same way in which British merchants in India during the eighteenth century were "apart," then they will find that there will be positions in society to which their sons and daughters cannot aspire. One man's "apartness," after all, quickly evolves into another man's discrimination.

Apply the Law

IN FACT, it is likely that, were they to be let alone, European Muslims would resolve the tensions between them and their hosts by practical compromises and the application of common sense as to what is acceptable under Western law and what is not. It might be thought that it is perfectly legitimate for Muslims to seek the right to pray during their work day, but that rioting and calls for the death of individuals in the name of Islam are not acceptable. After all, even "The Muslim Manifesto" acknowledges that Muslims must obey the laws of the non-Muslim state in which they live. But compromise is undermined by constant calls from outside bodies for a purer and more intransigent Islam and by the waves of fanaticism which arrive from the Middle East.

There are conclusions to be drawn from the present situation:

First, European countries already have considerable Muslim communities. These are likely to grow and to acquire greater political influence as immigrants and their children become citizens of the states in which they are domiciled.

Second, these communities, in so far as they can be judged by their political spokesmen, appear not to be taking the path of integration trodden by other types of immigrants. Their Islamic identity carries with it beliefs and practices that separate them from their adopted societies. Their demand, therefore, is for a special status, privileges additional to the ordinary rights of European citizens.

Third, European societies are finding it hard to resist such a demand. Indeed, there have already been occasions when host societies have had to abandon their prevailing social norms and defer to the customs of Islam, even when these run contrary to cherished beliefs (e.g., on the equality of women).

And fourth, these Muslim communities have also become a conduit through which movements of opinion in the Islamic world are conveyed into the host country. The governments of Muslim countries and the leaders of Islamic religious sects can, therefore, to a certain extent, exert influence on European societies.[5]

[5]The latest instance of this, which may serve as a postscript to this article, is the reaction of British Muslims to the annexation of Kuwait. Both the Muslim Institute and the more moderate Association of British Muslims have denounced the presence of American forces in Saudi Arabia as "blasphemy" and a "desecration of these holy places." It is true that some voices have also attacked the Iraqi invasion, but the United States has drawn the most fire from British Muslims. See the *Independent on Sunday*, August 19, 1990. A non-Muslim reaction has been an arson attempt at the Saddam Hussein Mosque in Birmingham.

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For the host governments in Europe, therefore, there is only one course to pursue. While displaying sympathy for Islam as a great religion and doing their best to ensure that Muslims find the conditions necessary for the practice of their faith, they must also insist that their laws be observed and that public order not be endangered by ecclesiastical oratory. The complexities of the Islamic settlement in Europe are, after all, not going to go away. Indeed, it is likely that the numbers of Muslim immigrants will increase as instability in the Middle East and poverty in Africa drive migrants across the Mediterranean. Nor will the ties between Europe and the heartlands of Islam be cut; it may be expected that the European Muslims will continue to be influenced by messages from their home countries for a long time to come. All this is a reaction to past and present humiliations. But European countries will not for long take on a penitential stance about their past imperial dealings with Islam, nor will they forever make allowances for wounded religious sensibilities. The application of law is their only answer to the paradoxes of Muslim expansion and renewal. If the European Muslims get no more and no less than that, they will not have done badly.

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Myths of European Unity

Alan Sked

ALL NATIONALISTS require a mythological view of the past in order to sustain their political beliefs and rally support for their cause. Those Europeans who now argue the case for what is, in effect, a united European "nation" are no exception. The only difference between these European nationalists and previous ones is that they themselves repudiate nationalism even as they espouse it, doing so under the illusion that nationality as a concept presupposes linguistic and cultural unity. It does not, of course: as we shall see, cultural unity is not all that difficult to manufacture after the event, and linguistic diversity is no great obstacle.

The main instrument of contemporary European nationalism is not language but history, and it is no coincidence that the European Commission has already established a committee of historians to ensure that history in Europe is taught in the proper "European" manner—the manner, that is, that will support and strengthen the required myths. One of the most important purposes of such myths is to provide a readily available shorthand to determine what—or who—is "good" or "bad" for the cause at hand. As applied to individuals, such judgements pertain to their success or failure in living up to their allegedly proper historical roles.

This process is now underway in Europe. Today, "good Europeans" are those who support European federalism or, as it is rather peculiarly known, "*the* European Ideal." "Bad Europeans" are traitors to the embryonic European nationalism that seeks to create a European superstate, which will in turn restore Europe's natural position at the center of the world. This whole approach invokes a very particular conception of European history built around a cluster of interlocking myths. The purpose of this article is to examine those myths. I identify five of them, and in summary form they are:

Myth One: "*The* European Ideal" transcends nationalism. Its aim is to bring nations together and prevent war from breaking out again in Europe. Opponents of "*the* European Ideal" wish to divide Europe into antagonistic national groups.

Myth Two: Europe is not, as Bismarck said, merely a "geographical notion" but a cultural unity formed from a shared historical experience. This experience is a cumulative one which begins with the ancient Greeks and thereafter follows a peculiarly "civilized"

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route through history via ancient Rome, "Christianity," the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution and comes to a climax with the creation of the European Community. This will soon become a federal Europe which will finally enthrone Reason in the world, thus saving it from the more primitive values of American materialism, Soviet and Chinese communism, Islamic fundamentalism, and Third World corruption.

Myth Three: Europe, in any case, has the right to stand at the center of world affairs. America, after all, is the offspring of Europe, as is Latin America. Communism in all its forms is a bastard child of European socialism, while Third World nationalism is once again the product of European thought. Finally, for most of the previous millennium Europe has dominated the world in terms of technology, ideology, and politics. Only since 1945 has it ceased to be the major actor in world affairs. It is therefore natural that Europe should once more resume a central position in world politics.

Myth Four: The creation of European unity since 1945 has been the work of a number of great idealists, headed by Jean Monnet. The idealism of these continental statesmen has been continually frustrated by Great Britain, a country led by "bad Europeans," which even today under Mrs. Thatcher is determined to stop the "inevitable" creation of a federal Europe.

Myth Five: Europe will never be able to play its true role in world affairs unless it is united. Unity will bring both strength and influence. Bigger is better. Unity will enable Europe to defend its interests in the world as well as to increase its prosperity.

Let us now examine these myths in turn to see whether "*the* European Ideal" really stands up to historical and political analysis.

The Myths Examined

MYTH ONE: "*The* European Ideal" as I have just described it is the vision of an historic civilization gaining political unity within its natural frontiers. Clearly these frontiers are not "national" ones, at any rate not in terms of linguistic unity. Nevertheless, the process envisioned is exactly the same as that which brought about the creation of nation-states such as Germany and Italy in the nineteenth century. Moreover, the examples of India, Switzerland, and the United States clearly demonstrate that it is possible to create a nationalism in a linguistically diverse population. What is needed is a sense of identity which can be manufactured using historical myths and political propaganda. This is exactly what happened with nineteenth-century European national cultures. National histories were written, often incorporating national folk-myths, and a nationalist press came into being which propagated the political cause. It is true, however, that revolutions and wars were often required before nation-states were finally established.

On the other hand, it should not be accepted that the nationalism of the nation-state inevitably leads to war and should be scorned on that ground alone. This is simply another myth. After all, nationalism has many advantages: it reconciles classes, smooths over regional differences, and gives ordinary people a sense of community, pride, and history. European nationalists are themselves seeking precisely those benefits from "*the* European Ideal." It is therefore ironic that they should blame nation-state nationalists exclusively for war, since a strict account of modern European history shows that wars were brought about largely by the refusal of supranational, dynastic states—the Ottoman, Hapsburg, and Napoleonic empires—to allow for national self-determination. Likewise, in the twentieth century, it was the Kaiser's bid for world power (*Griff nach der Weltmacht* in Fritz Fischer's famous phrase) and Hitler's racial mumbo jumbo which led to world conflict. In short, it has been the apparent redundancy of the nation-state and the yearning for continental power-bases which in previous centuries has more than once led to the negation of "European civilization."

Had Wilhelm II or Hitler—or for that matter Franz Joseph or Napoleon—been pre-

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pared to allow nation-states to exist (or come into existence peacefully), nationalism would not today have incurred such discredit and the nineteenth-century liberal ideal of free peoples living peacefully in nation-states might today still be the ideal, rather than the norm. In any case, states of all sorts—national, dynastic, communist, or other—have always found enough excuses besides nationalism to go to war. Whether it succeeds in creating a unified state, European nationalism is in itself no greater a guarantee of peace than any other political movement, cause, or ideology. Nor is it a guarantee against any future war of secession or civil war such as has happened frequently in other multinational or supranational federal states, and is now threatening to erupt in Gorbachev's Soviet Union.

MYTH TWO: For many people there exists such a thing as "European culture" or "European civilization." Ask them to define it and they are usually at a loss. Nevertheless they are likely to insist that Europeans are different from Chinese, Africans, or Arabs. At base, this concept is really just a racial or geographical notion, the same in fact which used to excite nineteenth-century explorers when they came upon other "white men" in remote lands among primitive tribes. In this sense, of course, "European" includes American, since Americans in the nineteenth century were regarded as just another branch of the white European race.

On the other hand, since America's rise to world power, Europeans have become keener to firm up their ideas about exactly what it is that makes them European—hence the much invoked historical odyssey from ancient Greece (Athens, of course, not Sparta) to modern Brussels. The objections to this way of interpreting Europe's past are fairly evident. It is so obviously selective—and on a variety of levels—that it clearly draws on propaganda rather than history. This remains true whether that history has been written by H.A.L. Fisher, H.G. Wells, or John Bowle. There really is little point in treating European history as if the Greeks existed only in ancient times; as if fascism and national socialism were not an integral part of the story; or as if Christianity did not divide Europeans as much as it united them.

It is not even plausible to claim Greece, Rome, and Christianity as essentially European civilizations. Greece and Rome were Mediterranean cultures with major centers in Africa, Asia Minor, and the Near East. Alexander the Great, it should be remembered, chose to conquer the civilized world in Egypt, Persia, and India. He was unaware that he was doing so in the cause of European civilization. Greece and Rome were followed by other Mediterranean civilizations—Byzantium and the Turks. Byzantium, like the Western Roman empire after Constantine, was a Christian power. Yet, Christianity, it should also be recalled, arose in Palestine from Jewish roots and was thus a Mediterranean religion. Although Christianity spread, it did so in a way that divided as much as united Europe. The Eastern church refused to recognize the leadership of Rome, which was also rejected by much of Western Europe after the Reformation. The result was that Russia and parts of Eastern Europe developed a different culture from that of Western and Central Europe, while for centuries religious wars and rivalries divided the Continent. Meanwhile, the Mediterranean tradition still survived. The Turks were only slowly driven out of Europe (the battle of Lepanto in 1571; the siege of Vienna in 1683; the Balkan Wars of 1912–13), although even today Turkey is a member of NATO and a candidate for full membership in the European Community. When the great French historian, Fernand Braudel, wrote on the age of Philip II, he chose the title "La Mediterraneé et le mond mediterraneén à l'époque de Philippe II." He did not write about the *European* civilization of that era.

Finally, despite the pretensions of Mitterrand's France, the legacy of the French Revolution cannot be claimed as a unifying force in European history either. As Mrs. Thatcher

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pointed out, that legacy was hardly liberty, democracy, and civil rights, but the opening of a Pandora's box of passionate ideologies which caused as much division as unity.

Europe, in truth, has been the home of many civilizations, often at the same time, with mixed results for the human race. It is facile and unhistorical to pretend that they have been a cumulative or a unifying force. To quote Geoffrey Barraclough, a historian who gave much thought to this matter: "Civilizations do not add up. The extraordinarily impressive portrait head of Yarim-Lun, King of Alalakh in the eighteenth-century B.C., the Hermes of Praxiteles, and Raphael's Sistine Madonna are not stages in a continuous development towards artistic perfection; each is the expression of a distinct civilization." The same is true of Egyptian pyramids, Doric temples, and Gothic cathedrals as far as architecture is concerned. And the same is true once again regarding literature. Aristophanes, Virgil, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Dostoevsky are not links in a chain. They do not add up to "European culture," but reflect different European cultures.

Today it is difficult even to talk of a contemporary European culture. Europeans read their national newspapers and watch national television programs. Over and above they may dine at Indian and Chinese restaurants (not to mention McDonald's) or watch American films, soap operas, and pop videos. They belong therefore both to their national cultures and to a cosmopolitan Western one based on jeans and junk food. To state that they belong to a specifically European culture is to indulge in an act of faith.

MYTH THREE: The relationship between Europe and the superpowers feels unnatural to many Europeans. After all, since roughly the time of the Renaissance, Europe has been at the center of world affairs—voyages of discovery, colonial acquisitions, rising living standards, agricultural and industrial revolutions, modern theories of government, the building of world empires, the spreading of "civilization," and much else. Russia during most of this time has had to "catch up" with Western Europe, not dominate or threaten it. Until recently (1917 or, better, 1945) even the United States has had only a passive role to play in world affairs, being invited to redress the balance of the Old World only when the European balance itself had spun out of control. Normally, the world was expected to revolve around a European axis.

Today many Europeans are hoping that this situation may once again prevail. Having recovered their confidence since 1945 they profess dismay at U.S. and Soviet diplomacy. It is true that the Soviet Union never enjoyed much support in the West, but since the death of Kennedy, the reputation of the United States has also suffered a great decline in Europe. The war in Vietnam, the overthrow of Allende, Watergate, the Carter years, the Iran-*contra* affair have all made Europeans decry the poor leadership and policies of successive American presidents. Whether President Bush's impressive performance in forging a coalition against Saddam Hussein in the initial stages of the Gulf crisis will do anything to modify this trend remains to be seen, and will depend on how the crisis is resolved. In any case, it is conveniently forgotten that most European countries themselves have had a similar, patchy record, with France in Vietnam, Algeria, and Madagascar; the British at Suez and in Cyprus; Spain, Portugal, and Greece suffering under dictatorships as recently as the 1970s; Italy with P–2, the Red Brigades, and the Mafia; Belgium with intractable linguistic problems; Ireland with the IRA; West Germany with the Baader-Meinhof gang and the *Berufsverbot*. European "experience," it is assumed, will do the trick. Once again it is conveniently forgotten that it was "European experience" that forced America into the role of world leader in the first place.

Finally, it is overlooked that Europeans have found it extraordinarily difficult to agree on anything. Until very recently, the Continent was divided along ideological lines. In Western Europe, only some states are mem-

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bers of NATO, only some members of NATO are full members, and many European states still prefer neutrality. Even on an issue such as terrorism it has proved enormously difficult to achieve any common policy. There are wide differences of opinion on economic and social policy and on the fate of different parts of the world, such as the Middle East, South Africa, and Latin America. What then does Europe really have to offer in terms of world leadership?

MYTH FOUR: For many Europeans—especially the "good" ones—the fact that European unity has not yet been achieved is due above all else to the diplomacy of the United Kingdom. This is *the* myth of the postwar European past. Continental Europe, it is said, was led by the founding fathers, Monnet, de Gasperi, Adenauer, Schuman—idealists all—while Great Britain, under Attlee and Bevin, Churchill and Eden, frustrated their work. Postwar European history, therefore, is written in much the same style as that of European Civilization or the Ascent of Man. Instead of the Stone Age leading to the Bronze Age leading to the Iron Age leading to the Machine Age, or Greece leading to Rome leading to Christianity leading to Modernity, we have the story of the Council of Europe leading to the Schuman Plan leading to the Pleven Plan leading to the Treaty of Rome leading to the Single European Act. The obvious destination of future European history is a United Europe. But although this plan has been carved out on tablets of stone in Heaven, Britain, now in the guise of Mrs. Thatcher, is once again offering satanic opposition to the forces of light.

The true history of postwar Europe is very different. For a start, the Continent was not full of idealists in the late 1940s and early 1950s and the country that pushed hardest for European unity was not France, Germany, or Italy, but the United States. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and Americans were convinced that if federal union could work well for them, it could also do the same for Europe. They surprisingly overlooked the fact that Europeans speak different languages, had been burning and bombing and otherwise exterminating one another for the previous six years, and that the Continent contained more war criminals than "federasts" (the term coined by Dutch foreign minister Stikker in 1948 to describe federalists). Little wonder that America's plans went askew. However, since the Americans were threatening to link Marshall aid to European unity, the Council of Europe was proposed by the French as a means of playing along with them (whilst also serving domestic political purposes). Much more significantly, the French proved highly unwilling to turn the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) into a supranational organization and quickly agreed with the British to limit the scope of the European Assembly quite strictly.

For that matter, neither was the Schuman Plan the simple result of ideological conviction. Monnet needed access to cheap German coking coal to revive heavy industry in France and wanted control of potential German armaments production taken out of German hands. The Italians, for their part, wanted access to iron ores in French Algeria, while the Germans were happy, so soon after the war, to be treated as anything approaching equals. Britain always rejected supranationalism, but this neither undermined, nor was intended to undermine, European cooperation. Britain had taken the lead on the OEEC in 1947, had built up the Brussels Treaty Organization in 1948, and had promoted the Western European Union in 1955 for Europe's defense. Britain had also taken the lead in persuading the Americans to defend Europe at a time when French defense and foreign affairs priorities centered around Vietnam and *Algérie française* (the latter a rather peculiar European concept which might be taken, albeit rather generously, to represent the Mediterranean tradition in European culture).

The French liked to believe that they were the key to European integration, some-

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thing which they really only favored when it suited France. They could thus kill off the European Defense Community in 1954 and, between 1963 and 1969 under de Gaulle, both exclude Britain from the Common Market and stop European federalism in its tracks. They even withdrew from the integrated command system of NATO and pursued a foreign policy at odds with their European partners. However, it is Great Britain which is condemned as having been consistently anti-European. This has largely been due to British complaints about a Common Agricultural Policy which has always been recognized as profligate, but which was deliberately designed to suit French interests while keeping Britain out. Today France still attempts to present itself as more "European" than Britain, despite the fact that Great Britain has always complied with Community directives more quickly and comprehensively than France, or any other member state.

MYTH FIVE: Despite setbacks, Europe *is* now approaching the stage where an honest debate is required on its future. Supporters of "*the* European Ideal" demand a full federal superstate, but that of course is only one ideal to choose from among many. Others may prefer some sort of confederation along Swiss lines or an even looser system of cooperation such as exists today. Certainly, if the internal market is completed by 1993, the key question should be: "Is there any need to go further?" Coordination of defense and foreign policies hardly requires new institutions, whilst most other areas of government, such as health, education, and social welfare, should surely not be run from Brussels.

Federalists tend to become emotional when their case is attacked. They say they wish to outlaw war from Europe and that only a federal state will enable them to do this. In fact, peace in Western Europe is already secure under present institutional arrangements and there is no need to go further. On the larger question—whether Europe should become a superstate—federalists often become rather coy. They say they have no desire to create a superpower in Europe, yet they cannot get around the fact that a single European market with a population and GNP greater than America's would in itself transform international affairs. At this point, however, European nationalism often reasserts itself: Why should Europe not equal the superpowers in international affairs?

The question is a natural one but can be answered honestly only by examining the nature of a European superpower. To be organized properly it would require much more in the way of revenues, bureaucrats, and armed forces, as well as more regulation and uniformity. It would also have to assume more responsibilities around the world with no guarantee of being able to execute them successfully. America, after all, has a rather mixed record in international affairs since 1945. It was unable to prevent the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe; unable to create a United Europe; unable to escape a military commitment to Western Europe; unable to prevent the communist takeover of China; unable to liberate the people of North Korea; unable to win the war in Vietnam; unable to save the Shah of Iran or to rescue American hostages in the Middle East; and more recently unable to forestall the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The U.S. is expected nonetheless to intervene everywhere as a world policeman and to spend millions on aiding and defending states around the world whose problems are often self-inflicted.

The Soviet Union, likewise, has a miserable record in international affairs. No advanced country in the world has freely accepted Soviet leadership and, apart from a residual presence in Eastern Europe, it has limited influence only in Cuba, Ethiopia, and North Korea. Yet the Soviet Union has bankrupted its economy by spending millions on armaments to protect this dismal empire.

Among the potential superstates, on the other hand, Europe is in a political and economic position similar to Japan. Europe's defense expenditure is limited and its world role is less than it might well deserve to be.

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Why then give up this favorable situation merely for the role of stumbling giant? The irony is that Europe can only remain really true to its past if it refuses this poisoned chalice, since, for the last five hundred years, disunity has often been its strength. According to Professor E.L. Jones's account of the "European Miracle," it was the "unity" of the Ming, Mogul, and Ottoman empires which sealed the fate of other parts of the world and allowed Europe to take the lead.[1] Professor Paul Kennedy's study of *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* would not appear to point to any different moral. "Imperial overstretch" is looming ominously before Europe already.

Bigger then is not best. Perhaps we should recall the words of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois:*

> In Asia they have always had great empires: in Europe these could never subsist. Asia has larger plains; it is cut into much more extensive divisions by mountains and seas. . . . [I]n Europe, the natural division forms many nations of a moderate extent, in which the ruling by laws is not incompatible with the maintenance of the state. . . . It is this which has formed a genius for liberty, that renders every part extremely difficult to be subdued and subjected by a foreign power.

Perhaps then it is our divisions which have helped to keep us free; our rivalries which have sustained our spirits; and our differences which have contributed to our strength. Certainly, in the future, it will be our determination to remain democratic that will count for most. Our commitment to diversity in liberty must always outweigh the attractions of uniformity.

Recent events in Eastern Europe should also make us stop and think. The Soviet empire has already broken up and the Soviet Union itself may soon do so. If, after further progress in democratization, the Eastern European and Soviet peoples request admittance to the "common European home," we are faced with the prospect of a European state stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific. To make such a state a federal one would surely be an act of madness. But to create a European Union, League, Community, or Commonwealth along lines similar to those in existence today might just belong to the realms of possibility.

Europeans should refrain from romanticizing their past and should beware of idealizing their future. They should place limits on their ambitions and recognize the advantages as well as the disadvantages of their present situation. Oswald Spengler once compared the motivation behind the construction of the Egyptian pyramids, the Doric temples of ancient Greece, and the Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages. The first he attributed to "inexorable necessity"; the second to "balance and symmetry on a deliberately limited scale"; the third to a yearning for "infinite space." If we must worship at Europa's shrine, let us do so in the spirit of the ancient Greeks, rationally and in a balanced manner. The last thing Europe needs is Gothic horror.

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[1]E.L. Jones, *The European Miracle, Environments, Economies, and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

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Dunkirk, and Other British Myths

Christopher Coker

What do they know of England
Who only England know?
—Rudyard Kipling

THE PATH TOWARD greater European cooperation over the past three decades has been riddled with dissembling and pretense by Britain's European partners. The greatest pretense of all is that the power of nationalism can be willed away on a cloud of good intentions. Good intentions may be the stuff of diplomacy, but they are the curse of politics.

If it is to emerge as a major power bloc in the twenty-first century, Europe must remain a community of nation-states. Back in the early 1980s, at a time of "Eurosclerosis" when it looked as though European union was far off, Octavio Paz wrote of the nations withdrawing into themselves, devoting their energies to creating "a prosperity without grandeur," a hedonism without passion, a politics without risk. Today, as the Community marches toward its goal of economic integration in 1992, there is every reason to suppose that nationalism will play a positive role in creating a stronger, less diffuse, more purposeful Europe.

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Britain, alas, will not be one of the countries involved in such a union if it insists on adhering to a set of myths that has done more than anything else to divide Britain from the Continent and to confirm the Europeans in their often mistaken belief that the British are not good Europeans at all.

More particularly, the British subscribe to three national myths which serve to harden their prejudices against the European Community. Each in its own way is as harmful as Alan Sked's "Myths of Europe."

Myth One: "The Miracle of Dunkirk"

THE FIRST myth centers on a certain version of history. The "miracle of Dunkirk"—of Britain surviving and standing alone when Europe was falling under German control—is one that continues to play a prominent role in the British debate about its relationship to Europe. It provides a spiritually satisfying justification for British apartness. It also obscures the fact that in 1940 Britain might have taken a different road altogether from the one it has travelled for the last forty years.

Most informed observers know of Winston Churchill's offer of an Anglo-French union in the last days before the fall of France. Less known is an earlier memorandum written on February 28, 1940, by Sir Orme Sargent, the assistant undersecretary of state at the Foreign Office. Sargent sug-

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gested that after this war, and in contrast to what had happened in the aftermath of World War I, the United Kingdom would have to give France a guarantee of union in a postwar Europe, the only guarantee that could count against a resurgent Germany. Sargent acknowledged that such a proposal represented "an alarming and dangerous surrender of British sovereignty," but maintained that it was a necessary one. It was an idea enthusiastically endorsed by the prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, and his foreign secretary, Lord Halifax. Indeed, while the prime minister elaborated the theme in several speeches, plans were drawn up by the Board of Education for a campaign to teach British school children, as well as the British public, of the need for a union with France.

It was "the miracle of Dunkirk" in the eight days from May 28 to June 4, 1940, that destroyed the proposal. By July 15, Halifax was writing that, instead of a closer union with France, the cabinet was considering "a special association" with the United States. Halifax thought that such an association might "replace the idea of Anglo-French union among the various plans we make for the future." Most members of the cabinet were in fact relieved that the idea of an Anglo-French union was one whose time has passed even before it had come. Four days later, Sir Maurice Hankey, minister without portfolio (the cabinet's chief trouble-shooter, that is), who had been chairing the committee to examine plans for postwar Anglo-French collaboration, spoke for them when he wrote, "It is almost a relief to be thrown back on the resources of the Empire."

If the United Kingdom was ultimately successful in the war, Hankey went on to note, its very success would "expose the fallacy of the glib statement that Great Britain is no longer an island—we shall have disproved the strategical theories on which our policy has been based in recent years." Foremost among them, he noted, was the idea that an alliance with France and other continental states who had subsequently "proved so unreliable" would be essential to British security. As Lord Beaverbrook put it in the summer of 1940, "We are all splendid isolationists now."

Hankey was wrong in one respect: the United Kingdom fell back not so much on the resources of empire as the resources of the United States, as Franklin Delano Roosevelt stretched American neutrality to the limit in order to aid the beleaguered British. Not everyone, however, saw the Anglo-American relationship as being particularly "special." In September 1940, Hitler told Serrano Suñer, the Spanish foreign minister, that England had chosen to become an American colony and would remain so if it won the war. After the United States entered the conflict, the French novelist Drieu la Rochelle wrote that the problem facing France in 1941 was different from that of 1940: "We no longer have to choose between England and Germany but between America and Europe. . . . " The French themselves quite correctly refused to make that choice at the time, though they did make it many years later; the United Kingdom still seems reluctant even to acknowledge that a choice is necessary.

THE BRITISH retained the Dunkirk mentality to the end of the war and well beyond. In a fit of hubris, the noted British internationalist and former champion of the League of Nations, Lord Davies, imagined that it would be possible for the United Kingdom and the United States not only to redraw the map of Eastern Europe but the map of Western Europe as well. He, for one, saw no necessity to restore the exiled Western European governments, most of whom were located in London, simply because they had for the most part been democratically elected. The unique community that grew in London between 1940 and 1945, a community of exiled governments which looked to Britain, not the United States, to lead Europe into the postwar world, was one on which the British themselves turned their backs.

At a 1946 meeting in Geneva convened to discuss the "European mind," the French

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writer Maurice Druon declared that he had known two Europes: one with the sun rising in the Caucasus and setting in the Atlantic, another, with its seat in London, made up of European exiles who did not merely belong to Europe by birth but by virtue of engaging in a "common struggle." The latter represented the Europe that had finally won. Druon's vision, however, was not shared by those who had played host to the exiled governments, including Churchill, whose own European unity speech in Zurich the same year differed significantly in emphasis and tone.

In any case, Britain chose to align itself with neither "Europe," choosing instead to remain aloof. The Dunkirk mentality was expressed fittingly by George VI in a letter to his mother, immediately after Britain's continental disengagement in 1940: "I feel happier now we have no allies to be polite to and to pamper." Even so unmilitary a figure as Bloomsbury's Leonard Woolf wrote:

> We had that strange sense of relief—almost of exhilaration—at being left alone, "shot of" all encumbrances, including our allies—"now we can go it alone" in our muddled, make-shift, empirical English way.

What explanation is there for such extraordinary statements at a time when Britain was near defeat? Perhaps, the most important perspective of the British in their critical hour of need was that a nation without allies is a nation that cannot be let down. Standing *against* Germany in 1940 was translated quite soon into standing *apart* from Europe; and, only too easily, that was translated by some into contempt for Europe and its idea of European unity.

The myth of Dunkirk lives on. In a speech in Liverpool in January 1990 commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Dunkirk, the redoubtable politician, Enoch Powell, asked:

> Where were the European unity merchants in 1940? I will tell you. They were either writhing under hideous oppression or they were aiding and abetting that oppression. Lucky for Europe that Britain was alone in 1940.

A view shared by Mrs. Thatcher? We do not know. The young Margaret Roberts was only fourteen in 1940, and history does not record her reaction to the fall of France. We do know, however, her father's observation during the war that France was "corrupt from top to bottom," the common explanation for the otherwise inexplicable collapse of the Third Republic and a view that persists even to this day. We can only speculate what impact such a judgement, delivered by an adored father, had on the mind of the teenage Margaret Roberts.

Myth Two: English Exceptionalism

THE "MIRACLE of Dunkirk" happened also to confirm the British in their long-standing faith in a second myth—of their superiority to other Europeans; the sort of superiority that is conveyed by the hoary newspaper headline joke, "Fog in the Channel, Continent Cut Off."

Long before 1940 it was part of the accepted national wisdom that England was distinct from other nations, both in spirit and the nature and quality of its social institutions. Generally this phenomenon of English exceptionalism was seen in terms of Progress or Maturity. England was different from other countries because it was ahead of them. It was particularly ahead of them because it had escaped "the Continental nuisance called bureaucracy" which Carlyle railed against in the 1840s. Freedom was guaranteed by the unwritten but unparalleled British Constitution, England's greatness of spirit by the non-corporate state.

Even in their prime, of course, the English never wholly believed in the myth themselves. In his last completed novel, *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens caricatured the odious Mr. Podsnap. "We Englishman," he informs a visitor from France, "are very Proud of Our Constitution. It was Bestowed Upon Us by Providence." "And ozer countries?"

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asks the hapless Frenchman, "They do Sir. . . *as* they do."

The myth of exceptionalism nevertheless survived the nineteenth century and looks set to survive into the twenty-first. England may no longer be the leading economic power of Europe but it is still deemed to be more "free." What makes it so? Most Englishmen would say the absence of "officialdom." Set foot on the Continent, and you find yourselves confronted by the corporate state—in the person of *dounaiers* and *gendarmes*. Continental Europeans may have other failings too—the French may be too self-interested, the Germans too self-assertive, but they are all carriers of the virus know as "functionarism." Of all the differences between the English and "other" Europeans, none is deemed so significant as that which is presumed to exist between a corporate Europe and a non-corporate England, between a continent in which most aspects of life are regulated by the state, and a country in which the citizen is free to do broadly what he or she wants. For those who believe this myth, the process of European integration threatens to restrict, if not destroy, the liberties of an Englishman.

THOSE WHO subscribe to this myth might concede that the drift to corporatism which was such a marked feature of English political life in the 1960s and 1970s had narrowed the gap between England and the Continent; but they would then almost certainly go on to insist that things had changed with the Thatcher Revolution. True, they have. Mrs. Thatcher, however, has not reversed that trend, only arrested it. The liberation of the citizen may have been extended by lifting exchange controls, deregulating the market, and privatizing public sector corporations. Parliamentary sovereignty, however, had not been advanced by a government that, like its predecessors, has shown scant interest in the reform of the House of Lords. Public accountability has not been furthered by emasculating local government on a scale without precedent in English history. Nor have such basic liberties as freedom of the press been enhanced by recent legislation intended to combat terrorism, laws which prevent the media from interviewing members of proscribed organizations including the Provisional IRA. In the rest of Europe, anti-terrorist legislation is far less restrictive, even in countries like Spain which are on the "frontline" against terrorism.

The case for advancing a notional "exceptionality" as an argument against the European Community hardly holds up in any comparison with other European countries. Consider, for example, the decentralized political system in Germany, or the accountability of petty officialdom in France since the Pompidou reforms of the early 1970s, or the regrettable fact that Britain has been taken to the European Court of Human Rights more often than any of its partners. Even the country's criminal justice system, long an object of particular pride on the part of the British people, looks rather battle fatigued in the wake of three *causes célèbres* involving suspected IRA terrorists—the Maguire Seven, the Birmingham Six, and the Guildford Four. In the case of the Birmingham Six, the suspects are expected to be unconditionally released after fifteen years of futile appeals. In the other two cases, the prisoners were exonerated, their sentences quashed.

The case against a corporate Europe will not be strengthened by subscribing to a questionable understanding of what supposedly makes England different from other European countries. It *is* different in many respects, but not in terms of corporatism, where England's record is no better or worse than most other European powers.

That record is worst, of course, on the economic front. "What virtue can there be," asked Geoffrey Elton, professor of modern history at Cambridge, in 1983, "in studying the muddled history of an offshore island whose supposed achievements have turned out to be illusory?" It was a question prompted by Britain's economic performance since the 1950s, a performance that had been exceptional only in its feebleness.

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Britain has clearly been declining relative to its European partners for forty years or longer. In a valedictory despatch written by Sir Nicholas Henderson in 1979 on his retirement as ambassador to France, Britain's performance was compared with that of France and Germany, chosen by Henderson as the yardstick against which to measure Britain's descent from power. In the 1950s, Britain's GDP was larger than that of either France or Germany, and in terms of national income alone, the United Kingdom was the third power in the world. By 1979, Britain had fallen to the position of fifth largest economy in the world, and only the third largest in Europe, with Italy quickly catching up. (It overtook Britain ten years later.) In failing to match even its *European* partners, let alone the United States and Japan, Henderson concluded, it could no longer count itself in the major league. He particularly lamented the loss of self-esteem: "We talk of ourselves without shame as being one of the less prosperous countries of Europe."

Henderson went on, "The French press is full of articles about Britain's plight, not least depressing for their patronising search for favourable elements such as our language and our humour." His memorandum has a particular resonance for a generation of Englishmen, who, like the heroine of Nancy Mitford's 1960 novel, *Don't Tell Alfred*, were brought up on the tradition that all things English were best. Speaking to the British ambassador's wife in Paris, the heroine asks:

> Have you noticed it's just those very things the English pride themselves on most which are better *here?* Trains, more punctual; tweeds, more pretty; football: the French always win. Doctors—can't be compared, nobody ever dies here until they are a hundred—the post, the roads, the police—France is far better administered.

The ambassador's wife replies sardonically, "It isn't fair, is it?" Fair or not, this is the point at which the myth of English exceptionalism meets the reality of Britain's decline. It is the point at which the English should question whether they are exceptional at all.

Myth Three: "Britain Betrayed"

THE BRITISH themselves often forget that the main argument for entering the Community in 1973, expressed so tellingly by the senior official on Britain's negotiating team, Sir Con O'Neil, was a feeling that Britain was becoming increasingly sidetracked historically. For O'Neil, as for everyone else in the early 1970s, entry to the Community was seen exclusively in the context of role playing.

From the beginning, the British felt that, once they were in it, the role of leader of the Community would inevitably pass into their hands. Willy Brandt recalls that George Brown, Labour foreign secretary in the mid–1960s, was eager to enter the Community so Britain could take the lead. In his diaries, Richard Crossman, a British cabinet minister, recalls an official paper on EC entry that argued that it was necessary less for practical reasons than for the opportunity it would present Britain to be counted once again in the Councils of Europe. In one of his diary entries, Tony Benn, another member of Harold Wilson's 1964–70 government, recalls that his permanent secretary assumed that Whitehall would automatically dominate Brussels once Britain had joined the Community, given that the British civil service was "so full of experienced people."

But in seeking to find a new historical role for themselves as leaders of the Community, the British were bound to be disappointed. They neither had the economic nor the political base from which to lead from the front. As a result, fifteen years later, the cry of "Britain betrayed"—denied what should have been given it by right—is one that has resonance even for those who by sentiment, if not tradition, would consider themselves pro-European.

In retrospect, Britain's expectation that entry into the Community would redress the international balance in its favor was doubly

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unfortunate. First, it was bound to cause resentment when it became clear that the British could neither challenge French leadership nor forge an axis with Paris as the Germans had done in the 1960s. The resentment accumulated when the French, in turn, were supplanted by the Germans—not Britain's "historic" enemy, but its most recent and best remembered.

The "Ridley affair" in July 1990—when the violently anti-German views of a senior member of the cabinet were published in the *Spectator* magazine, forcing him to resign—provided an insight into the fears that prevail in the British government. In an earlier paper, written for the prime minister by her foreign policy adviser following a special seminar on "the German Problem" held at her residence, the Germans were described as "over-anxious," "sentimental," "overbearing," "lacking confidence in themselves." The key word is overbearing. It has come as an unwelcome surprise to the British, as it has to the French, to find that reunification has finally liberated the Germans from forty years of having to apologize for their own existence, for having to treat the Federal Republic, in the words of the German philosopher Habbermas, as "a perpetual memorial to Auschwitz." The haste with which the Germans moved toward unification is easily confused with an appetite for power. It is in fact an appetite for playing a role that has long been denied them, a role that has been for so long the prerogative of France and Britain. Unfortunately, if inevitably, fear of German unity has been subsumed into a greater fear of *European* unity and its implications for British sovereignty.

In the early 1970s, when it had become clear that Britain could not replace France as Europe's leading power, the British were at least able to console themselves that both countries played a primary role in security because only they had status on the international stage (permanent membership on the Security Council), world responsibilities (the Commonwealth/Francophone Africa), and the military capabilities to discharge those responsibilities (nuclear weapons/power projection forces).

English Queasiness

The prospect of unification with Europe brings on a certain queasiness among the English. Here, Margaret Thatcher shares the instincts of her people. In a Durham pub, I was surprised to hear a youngish, articulate woman inveigh passionately against the tunnel [between Britain and France]. "Everything we've fought for for 1,000 years we're now handing over to Europe on a silver platter," she said, and then struggled to find words equal to her disgust. "This dream of a united Europe—that's *Hitler's dream*."

William Grimes, "Chunnel Vision"
New York Times Magazine, Sept. 16, 1990

With a united Germany, it is clear that the British will be excluded from what the Germans themselves will see as *domaines reserves*: a "special partnership" with the United States which will replace the Anglo-American special relationship; a special understanding with the Soviet Union which has already replaced de Gaulle's special Franco-Russian *entente;* and a special capacity (Deutschmark diplomacy) in a world in which the main traditional currency of power, military force, has been increasingly devalued. There is no intrinsic reason why these special rights should challenge Britain's interests. It is becoming clearer all the time, however, that the only way to contain German ambitions is under what the Germans themselves call "a common European roof," predicated on a degree of European integration which the British at the moment find unacceptable.

Second, from the start, the British saw leadership of the Community in terms of one country being more equal than others. Harold Macmillan used to talk about the Six plus

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the United Kingdom being equal to the United States or the Soviet Union. In 1971, even the London *Times* argued that the United Kingdom, at the time fifth in a six-horse race, might through membership in the Community have the chance of becoming second, and moving up. The glib analogy merely served as a substitute for an analysis of what was needed to turn a set of individual states into a single international actor. Only such loose and wishful thinking made it possible to envisage a Community that would be increasingly formidable and unified in its *external* dealings with other international actors, but would at the same time continue to have a very low level of *internal* integration.

Could the Community ever be effective as an international bargaining unit—equal in status to the United States and Japan—without becoming in the process a more integrated, even federal structure? If the British ever asked themselves the question, they never provided an answer.

The Necessity of Choice

AS WE HAVE seen, if politics is the text of European debate, history is the subtext. More than politics, of course, separates the anti-European lobby from the pro-Europeanists, and more than history separates the English from Europe, but history is the key to understanding Britain's position.

The three myths that I have discussed have provided an historical rationale for the real predilection of British foreign policy in the past forty years. It has provided the sanction of the past for the refusal to choose between Europe and the rest of the world.

After 1945, the United Kingdom grossly exaggerated, if it did not actually invent, a "special relationship" with the United States, notwithstanding that Washington was not prepared to allow Britain a role totally independent of Europe. It was always declared American policy to encourage Britain to look to the continent of Europe, where its future appeared to lie. Christian Herter's vision of an Atlantic community, like John F. Kennedy's vision of a twin pillar Atlantic Alliance, envisaged a division of responsibilities between Europe and the United States, not a Roman triumvirate of three powers, with Britain acting the role of Lepidus (a telling analogy drawn by a British official in 1945). Instead of making a choice between America and Europe, however, Britain preferred to find a "middle way."

At the same time, an invincible belief in English exceptionalism reinforced the Dunkirk myth. "History is now and England" wrote T.S. Eliot in the heady days of World War II. In the summer of 1940 it was not surprising that the British saw themselves—in the words of Jan Morris, popular historian of empire—as "special people with special duties of their own to perform." For Morris those responsibilities found their authentic voice in Winston Churchill and their authentic expression in holding the line against fascism, a policy that enabled Britain to stand center stage, not in the wings.

Even before World War II, historians of English exceptionalism, such as G.M. Trevelyan, who tended to take Churchill's rhetoric as a dogma of their faith and tried for as long as they could to convey it in their writings, sensed that they were fast ceasing to appeal to the popular imagination, in part because there was nothing "exceptional" in an economic decline they could no longer conceal. In a sense they were too pessimistic. For instead of devaluing the myths and rhetoric, economic decline enhanced their compensatory and reassuring appeal. Eight years ago, the Falklands War struck a chord among an apathetic, relatively contented race of islanders whose contentment derived not from material prosperity but from the comforting belief that a country's stature is not measured entirely in terms of trade deficits. British power may have eroded, but the value of its institutions remain. The ledger of history has not been wiped clean overnight.

Entry into the European Community has not forced the British to choose between the values they share with their European partners and the "uniqueness" of their own insti-

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tutions, a uniqueness which makes up the notion they have of themselves, their "meaning" in the world.

The British might have something to say to Europe but they also believe they have something to say to the United States—a country which still bears the mark of its colonial connection with England, its language. They also believe they have something more to say to the Commonwealth, an institution whose members, alas, have really nothing in common, except a fiction, British-made for British consumption. (Even the increasingly evident failure of British institutions to take root in most of the Commonwealth countries is in a way comforting, for it confirms the British in their opinion that only their "special" qualities can make those institutions work.)

Finally, the myth that the leadership of Europe was Britain's for the asking discouraged British politicians from deciding what elements of sovereignty might have to be surrendered to ensure that Britain itself derived maximum advantage from its membership in the Community. Even today the British act as though such awkward choices should have disappeared when Britain joined the Community in 1973. But Britain's interests, unfortunately, are not necessarily identical to those of its partners, any more than are those of Germany or France. Political trade-offs always have to be made. If such trade-offs represent the choices that membership in the Community has forced Britain to confront, it has been no mean achievement.

WHAT ARE WE to make of all this? Why do these myths still dominate British political life? Why should a nation that, under Mrs. Thatcher's leadership, has been willing to make striking choices at home be so averse to making them in the field of foreign policy?

There may be many answers, but the one that seems the most plausible lies in the continuing saga of Britain's decline. Back in 1962, an editorial in the *Economist* opined that a fear of choice was a true mark of a power in decline. The policy of *attentisme*, of waiting upon events rather than shaping them, is perhaps to be expected of a nation that prefers not to look reality in the face for fear of what it may find.

For Britain to break out of this psychological dead-end, two preconditions seem necessary. The first is to rediscover Britain's true past, not the ersatz version offered by politicians seeking to derive a dividend from what historical capital is still left in the bank. Rewriting the history of 1940 to show how it led to an historical cul-de-sac, exposing English exceptionalism for the historical fiction it is, explaining why Britain had neither the resource base nor the political will to lead Europe from the front might prompt the British to think of their own interests in a more hard-headed, less whimsical fashion. By rediscovering the truth of their own history rather than the "providentialist" version which still influences public rhetoric and still flames private passions, the British might find the courage to choose.

Second, Britain might face the future with more confidence if it were unencumbered by the "special" relationship with the United States as well as its membership in the Commonwealth. Were membership in the Community to become Britain's central commitment in the 1990s, it might at least change the context in which awkward choices have still to be made.

In that respect, Mrs. Thatcher's successful attempt at the summer 1990 Bermuda summit to get President Bush once again to announce that America's relationship with Britain was "special" has not helped. The special relationship, writes Robin Edmonds in *Setting the Mould: the U.S. and Britain*, has been a conceptual fortress within which the British have sheltered since World War II, regardless of the holes in its defenses. In fact, it was more a refuge than a fortress, a retreat in which the British could console themselves that they still counted, even as their power declined.

The Commonwealth too was a consolation of a kind. Withdrawing from this largely moribund organization would not require

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Britain to turn its back on the Third World. It would give it instead the confidence to face the future free of post-imperial angst and the need to overcompensate for the resentment of post-colonial dependency, so freely expressed by the majority of Britain's Commonwealth partners.

Deprived of the "special relationship" and the Commonwealth, and with only the Community left, the British would be much less inclined to talk about "us and them," or a "Euro-club" whose membership they seem to find unduly demanding. The British would be much more inclined to concentrate their energies on defining their own vision of the new Europe, instead of continually carping from the sidelines at everyone else's. As Michael Heseltine, Mrs. Thatcher's chief rival in the Conservative party, reminded the Institute of Directors in February 1988, Britain may know what it is against, but seems to have no knowledge of what it stands for.

An exaggeration? To be sure. At Bruges in 1985 Mrs. Thatcher outlined her vision of a new Europe. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall she has spoken frequently of enlarging the Community still further to avoid another artificial division of Europe, this time between those countries that are members and those that are not. If the British are now serious about defining what they stand for, then the situation may not be beyond hope. If they are not, then the United Kingdom will gradually drift into irrelevance, a fate the prime minister foresaw two days before the 1979 election when she predicted that, "Unless we change our ways and our directions, our greatness as a nation will be a footnote in the history books, a distant memory of an off-shore island lost in the midst of time."

As long as the British refuse to choose between Europe and the rest of the world, and refuse to decide what role they wish to play within Europe, they are in serious danger of becoming not Kipling's "Islanders," but Little Englanders who only England know.

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Moynihan's Law

Michael Lind

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *On the Law of Nations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). 177 pp., $22.50.

INTERNATIONAL law, the British jurist Sir Robert Chambers wrote in the eighteenth century, is "so necessary that its neglect would make the world a desert, and the nation, that should violate it first, would probably be extirpated by a general confederacy of mankind against it." Iraq, having violated international law by invading the sovereign state of Kuwait, deposing its legitimate government, and taking foreigners, including embassy personnel, hostage, now faces such a "general confederacy of mankind." Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan could not have chosen a better moment to publish his thoughts on what, in the older manner, he calls the law of nations.

To his reflections *On the Law of Nations* Moynihan brings not only his experience as ambassador to the United Nations, ambassador to India, and vice-chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, but also the learning, eloquence, and conviction that make him an example of what the Founders hoped a senator would be. At the core of this ambitious book is the perception around which Moynihan's thoughts on the subject have accreted—the perception of "a certain disorientation in American foreign policy derived from our having abandoned, for practical purposes, the concept that international relations can and should be governed by a regime of public international law." Senator Moynihan believes that "the United States is moving away from its long-established concern for and advocacy of international legal norms of state behavior."

In his first six chapters Moynihan recounts the history of American efforts, from Wilson to Carter, to promote international law. His chief villain—the Reagan administration—appears in the concluding chapter: "In the annals of forgetfulness," Moynihan's verdict reads, "there is nothing quite to compare with the fading from the American mind of the idea of the law of nations." Moynihan does not make a convincing case for his thesis that the practice of recent Republican presidents has been dramatically more lawless than that of their predecessors. The withdrawal of the United States from the World Court, UNESCO, and the Law of the Sea Convention during the Reagan administration represented a new unilateralism, to be sure, but these were perfectly legal actions. The heyday of assassination plots was the 1960s, not the 1980s. The Bay of Pigs invasion, the invasion of the Dominican Republic, and the Desert One raid, to say nothing of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, were every bit as irregular as the invasions of Grenada and Panama, and considerably more costly. Moynihan strains at the gnat of Reagan's successful *contra* policy, which contributed to the restoration of Nicaraguan democracy, while swallowing the camels of Truman's undeclared war in Korea and Kennedy's in

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Vietnam—the first a stalemate, the second a forfeit. Nixon was brought down and Reagan severely criticized for exercising powers which chief executives in the Democratic presidential era from 1932 to 1968 wielded with little criticism by anyone, except a few thoughtful conservatives such as James Burnham and Willmoore Kendall.

ON THE SUBJECT of conservative attitudes, however, Senator Moynihan is correct. By the 1980s, "A 'realist' school had developed which looked upon international law as a delusion of the well-intentioned but inexperienced." Moynihan maintains that "This was not the view of the Right; it was far more. . . in Judith Shklar's term, that of 'disillusioned liberals.' " The Reagan Doctrine, which dismissed international legal constraints on the forcible promotion of democracy abroad, "was a view with origins more on the left than on the right of American politics."

Conservatives varied, of course, in the degree to which they rejected not merely the abuse but the ideal of international law. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, rejecting "unilateral compliance" under certain circumstances, seemed to suggest merely that the devil sometimes quotes the international law scripture to his purpose. Others, however, shared the concern of Judge Robert Bork that, "As currently defined. . . international law about the use of force is not even a piety; it is a net loss for Western democracies." George Will has warned that "the chimera of international law may hold America hostage." Charles Krauthammer took this to an extreme when he declared, "The law—international law—is an ass. It has nothing to offer. Foreign policy is best made without it."

Senator Moynihan connects this dismissal of the very idea of international law with an increased willingness on the part of executive officers to flout U.S. legal and constitutional restrictions in the field of foreign policy. During the Iran-*contra* affair, the Right could have defended the Reagan administration's strategy while acknowledging that some of its actions, such as seeking foreign funding to carry out projects banned by U.S. law, were of questionable constitutionality. Instead, spokesmen for the Right tended to insist that in foreign affairs the presidency is not only all-wise but should be effectively all-powerful.

Many modern presidents, of course, have played fast and loose with both international law and the Constitution. What is new is impassioned argument on behalf of "extralegal" national and presidential discretion by people who call themselves conservatives. The denial of legal limits to the unilateral use of American force to promote democracy abroad, coupled with sweeping claims for alleged "plenary" and "prerogative" powers of a plebiscitary presidency, created during the past decade what can almost be described as a Bonapartism of the Right, a novelty in America. Reacting to Vietnam-era criticism of the "arrogance of power," the Right in the 1970s and 1980s adopted a theory of the benevolence of power. International law should not get in the way of the power of the United States to do good in the world, and presidents can be relied upon to use their supposed extraconstitutional and extralegal "prerogative" in the national interest. This may be an arguable position, but it has little in common with the American conservatism which views power as a necessary evil at best and seeks the rule of law, not of men.

On this point at least Senator Moynihan is correct: At present in the United States, there is a liberal theory of international law and a right-wing theory of its nonexistence, but no *conservative* theory of international law. If there is to be a principled conservative approach to public international law, the work of reconstruction will have to begin from scratch.

The first task is to demonstrate that public international law can actually exist. "Before congeries of customs, habits, norms and arrangements can properly be called law, questions need answers," George Will has written. "If international law is really law, who enacts, construes, adjudicates and en-

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forces it?" The answer is that the best models for public international law are found in pre-state societies, such as the American frontier and medieval Iceland. The latter is a particularly illuminating case. In Iceland, according to legal historian William Ian Miller in his *Bloodtaking and Peace-making: Feud, Law and Society in Saga Iceland*, the body of laws

> was unaccompanied by any state enforcement mechanism. There was no bureaucracy to oversee their administration, no permanent presence. . . that had a vested interest in their being honored. Law enforcement, like self-help, was the responsibility of the wronged party and his successor.

The place of police, courts, and legislatures in Iceland was taken by arbitration, outlawry, and institutions such as the body of Lawspeakers (respected jurists).

Public international law is not like modern Western municipal law and never will be, unless there is a world government. The law of the modern West, however, *can* aspire to the status of the Law of the West. In a legal regime that depends primarily on self-help for enforcement, of course, some transgressions may go unpunished if it is not in the interest of unaffected parties to help the victim punish the miscreant. "When Iraq menaced oil supplies, [the international] 'community' was galvanized, as it was not when Egypt intervened in Yemen (1962) and in countless other cases," George Will writes. But in systems of municipal law, enforcement of even criminal law by the sovereign is not automatic. Prosecutors, on the basis of considerations not unlike those of diplomacy, may decide to drop some charges against a defendant, or to forego prosecution altogether. Does this mean municipal law is not law at all? Moderate advocates of public international law assume that, while there will be common standards, in most cases those standards will be enforced by the party affected; collective action will be the exception, not the rule.

The fact that there are "outlaw" states—perhaps even an outlaw majority—does not exempt members of the civilized community of nations from obeying its norms "unilaterally." If Hitler and Hussein gas ethnic minorities to further their ends, should the United States, Britain, and France be free, even in theory, to do the same? The unilateral renunciation of certain means of foreign policy—such as wars of conquest and annexation, confiscation of foreign property, hostage-taking, the bombing of civilians, mass starvation—represents civilization, not sentimentality. If no enormity can be legally excluded from the arsenal of the "prudent statecraft" praised by critics of international law, there is something deeply wrong with their conceptions of prudence and statecraft.

THE CASE against public international law, then, becomes much weaker if that law is conceived of as a customary regime enforced by self-help, rather than the pseudo-legislation of a would-be world government. Conservatives, while acknowledging that such a system of public international law is possible, may still wonder whether it is desirable.

The late Hedley Bull made a useful distinction between three views of world politics—the Kantian, the Hobbesian, and the Grotian. For the Kantian, the world is a global society of individuals; for the Hobbesian, an anarchy of states; and for the Grotian, a global society of states. These world views arguably correspond to three approaches to international law, which might be called the Idealist, the Realist, and the Conventionalist. All three views have advocates on the American Right. Some libertarians, for example, with their vision of a borderless capitalist cosmopolis, might be described as right-wing Idealists. Conservatives in the Thomist tradition find themselves agreeing with another version of Idealism. Most American conservatives, however, impressed by the incongruity between the premises of Idealism and the realities of world politics, have tended to turn to some version of Realism, in which states, pursuing their interests, operate in a legal (although not necessarily a moral) vacuum.

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Realism has the merits of simplicity and consistency. As the legal theory of American conservatism, however, it suffers from serious defects. For one thing, it is poor strategy for the United States to repudiate the concept of international law. The Bush administration could never have organized a global coalition against Iraq if it professed to believe that the principles of the sovereign equality of states and the illegality of aggressive war are nonsense. Surely the norms of the world state system, in addition to a local balance of power and the price of oil, are at stake in the Persian Gulf crisis.

Moreover, radical positivism is incompatible with the central tradition of American constitutionalism, as Senator Moynihan points out by quoting the great early American jurist, Chancellor Kent:

> The law of nations, so far as it is founded on the principles of natural law, is equally binding in every age, and upon all mankind. But the Christian nations of Europe, and their descendants on this side of the Atlantic. . . have established a law of nations peculiar to themselves. They form together a community of nations, united by religion, manners, morals, humanity, and science, and united also by the mutual advantages of commercial intercourse, by the habit of forming alliances and treaties with each other, of interchanging ambassadors, and of studying and recognising the same writers and systems of public law.

By failing to distinguish between natural law and the Western law of nations, both Idealists and Realists leave out the crucial intermediary between mankind and the nation—the historic, evolving multinational civilization to which the United States, along with Canada, Australia, and the Latin American countries, has always belonged. The result is too often a sterile debate between proponents of the ahistoric rights of abstract world citizens and defenders of the ahistoric prerogatives of the state conceived in the abstract. Kent summed up the Conventionalist alternative: "When the United States ceased to be a part of the British empire, and assumed the character of an independent nation, they became subjected to that system of rules which reason, morality, and custom had established among the civilized nations of Europe, as their public law." The Constitution incorporates this pre-existing common law of Euro-American diplomacy when it assigns to Congress, rather than the states, the power *and* the implied obligation "to define and punish. . . Offenses against the Law of Nations."

Perhaps Chancellor Kent, the Founders, and other great American jurists such as Francis Lieber (who in the nineteenth century compiled the laws of war for the U.S. military) were deluded by a will o' the wisp. Still, there is something amiss on the American Right, when—even as Allan Bloom and William Bennett call for emphasis on Western civilization in education—some conservatives can deny the relevance of one of the major living traditions of that civilization, the tradition of public international law.

The positivist dismissal of international law is at war, too, with the capitalism that conservatives favor. The contradiction is most evident in the editorials of the *Wall Street Journal*, which mingle visions of a borderless capitalist utopia with derision for public international law and enthusiasm for limitless presidential power in foreign affairs. In the September 1990 issue of *Commentary*, George Gilder summed up the credo which fuses the Privatizer with the Privateer:

> In the 90's, intellectuals must understand that the reason to defend free societies is not their legal rectitude in international disputes or any obsolete shibboleth of national self-determination in little despotic satrapies around the globe. The reason to defend free nations is their role as the capitalist bearers of civilization and human progress, freedom and technology, in a world that will sink into unspeakable horror without their leadership.

In most times and places, advocates of extra-legal *realpolitik* and executive government have supported a regimented, autarkic economy as a tool of national power. Business, by contrast, has often supported the extension of

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public international law, as the bedrock of international commercial law and transnational property rights. Leading publicists of the American Right at present are engaged in the project of reconciling Hobbes and Cobden. Property rights and international trade would seem to be insecure, to say the least, in a world in which nations, encouraged by American theory and practice, recognize only explicit treaty rights and reject customary legal restraints on what governments can do to foreign governments, foreign nationals, and foreign property in the name of national policy.

THE GROTIAN vision of an evolving global society of states as the lineal successor of the earlier cultural and legal community of Europe, a society now expanding again after going on the defensive for seventy-five years, is ultimately the world view best suited to American conservative values and interests. The conservative ideal is not a Hobbesian world of autarkic blocs engaged in a life-or-death struggle to maximize their relative power, nor is it the Kantian or Wilsonian dream of a confederal or federal Republic of Earth. Rather, the conservative goal for humanity is a kind of Prussian *Zollverein* or Gaullist *Europe des patries* on a planetary scale. World government? Never. World customs union? Maybe.

For almost two centuries, what could be called Grotian republicanism informed the Whig-Republican version of American conservatism. The United States would be a well-armed manufacturing and commercial republic, using its influence in the world sparingly to deter global (although not necessarily regional) hegemonies and to press for the expansion of a common international legal civilization, characterized by multilateral disarmament, international arbitration, freedom of the seas, the rights of neutrals, and the liberation of nations from mercantilist empires. Now that the Cold War emergency is over, although grave but lesser challenges will confront the U.S. in the Persian Gulf and elsewhere, it may be time for this conservative Republican tradition to be renewed. Senator Moynihan notes that "in the 1980s [international law] had come to be associated with weakness in foreign policy. Real men did not cite Grotius." With the passing of Dutch Reagan from the political scene, perhaps Dutch Grotius should be welcomed back by the American Right.

A post-Cold War conservative approach to the role of law in foreign affairs, replacing the uncritical celebration of extralegal national and presidential power with a new respect for both international convention and the Constitution, would differ significantly from the approach of thoughtful liberals such as Senator Moynihan. To begin with, this new conservative approach would be true to its twentieth-century Republican roots in its suspicion of anything resembling a surrender of American military and political sovereignty to international organizations. Moynihan himself makes the useful distinction between international law and international organization. Of pre-World War II Republican foreign policy, he writes, "There was much internationalism, but little of international organization." For his part, Moynihan evidently approves of FDR's plan to turn over control of U.S. armed forces to the UN, the Baruch Plan for surrendering U.S. control over atomic weapons, and Harry Truman's ordering American armed forces to carry out a "police action" in Korea under UN auspices instead of asking Congress to declare war. Moynihan admits that presidents such as Wilson and Roosevelt broke laws, but excuses them because, unlike Reagan, they upheld the ideal of international organization. For all their commitment to international law, traditional American conservatives would prefer the most ruthless Kissingerian Realist to the FDR who felt it necessary to scratch out the following line, known as the "Lodge reservation," from a draft of his October 21, 1944 speech on the UN Charter: "We shall enter a peace organization as a sovereign power, and therefore our representative in that organization cannot legislate for us."

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Because of their concern for basic sovereignty, conservatives will tend to place less emphasis on the paper product of bodies such as the UN and the OAS and more on the development of new international customary norms by the United States and other great (and civilized) powers. In the area of customary law, for example, the Reagan administration, by its raid against Libya, may have joined Israel in justly enlarging the means by which states can respond to state-based terrorism directed at their nationals. (Whether the president had the constitutional authority to bomb a foreign capital without congressional authorization is a different question.) Other innovations are less happy—for instance, the abandonment by the past two administrations of the custom that foreign nationals can be apprehended abroad only with the permission of the local state, in favor of an assertion that the United States has the power to kidnap foreigners accused of crimes under U.S. law, such as General Noriega and Mexican drug traffickers. Unlike new forms of reprisal tailored narrowly for outlaw states, a supposed right of states to kidnap suspects abroad is not a plausible modification of customary international law, but a subversion of the very idea.

THE TENSION between the international "society" and the national "state" elements of the conservative vision of a "society of states" should also influence the post-Reagan Right's view of treaties. The replacement in large areas of international commerce, taxation, and regulation of both unwritten custom and executive discretion by formal bilateral and multilateral treaties and conventions such as the GATT and the U.S.-Canadian free trade pact is highly desirable. International legal regimes encouraging trade in services and protecting intellectual property rights such as patents in computer software and biotechnology should be a priority. On the other hand, treaties which encroach on core sovereignty interests of the United States should be entered into with leisure and repented of in haste. Senator Moynihan to the contrary, it was a good idea for the Reagan administration to withdraw from compulsory World Court jurisdiction, and an even better idea to pull out of UNESCO. The Law of the Sea—which would have set up an international socialist scheme for ocean resource extraction—was a horror from the point of view of sound private *and* public international law.

A rejuvenated conservatism which takes international law seriously, then, should be much more sympathetic to the military and diplomatic unilateralism of recent Republican administrations than to Senator Moynihan's enthusiasm for international organization. Conservatives as well as liberals, however, have reason to share Moynihan's concern about the tendency of presidents of both parties to ignore treaty obligations and the constitutional prerogatives of Congress when ordering the United States into war. Even if American conservatives are willing to dismiss public international law, they should think twice about the constitutional implications of a theory that so enlarges the exceptions to the rule under which Congress shall declare war that the rule no longer exists. If a future Democratic president should rely on his inherent authority and third-country funding to blockade South Africa and funnel weapons to ANC guerrillas, would conservatives be so quick to scorn the law of nations and statutes such as the War Powers Resolution? In the conservative arsenal a "Taft reservation" protecting the prerogatives of Congress in grants of war powers authority to the president should join the "Lodge reservation" protecting U.S. sovereignty in treaties such as the UN Charter and the NATO Treaty.

Senator Moynihan is wrong when he argues that President Reagan and the conservative movement can claim little responsibility for the collapse of Soviet power. The Reagan and Bush administrations deserve much of the credit for the accelerated bankruptcy of the Soviet empire and its renunciation of its bid for world hegemony, the peaceful reunification of Germany and Europe, and the unprecedented diplomatic

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cooperation of powers great and small against Iraq's dual threat to material and legal civilization. Even if occasional violations of international and constitutional law helped the United States during the Cold War, it would be a mistake to believe with Andrew Marvell that "the same Arts which do gain/ A Pow'r must it maintain." In the changed circumstances of the 1990s, it would be a sad irony if hostility to the very idea of public international law should handicap efforts by the successor generation of American conservatives to promote the peaceful, pluralist, and prosperous world order that American conservatives have sought for so long.

A British View

An attitude towards the UN of suspicion mingled with impatience is a familiar syndrome of Right-of-Center politics in the Western world. We all know how the argument goes: this Assembly is no fount of superior wisdom, no source of enlightened international legislation, but merely a gaggle of bickering countries, most of them more or less undemocratic, pursuing their own interests. The trouble with that argument is simply this: it is so clearly true, that it may encourage us to assume unthinkingly that the UN *ought* to be a fount of superior wisdom instead, legislating for us because it was more rational or better informed. Heaven help us if it tried to be such a thing. . . . Let us not complain too much about the fact that the UN is a gaggle of countries pursuing their own interests—for that is the one way it represents the nature of the real world.

All that has happened over the last six weeks is that a majority of those countries—including, unusually, all the members of the Security Council—have decided that their interests coincide. And that is sufficient to remove the main taint of hypocrisy from Mrs. Thatcher's invocations of the UN. Indeed, one has only to start comparing the UN with the Common Market to see how genuine her preference for the former must be. It is not just that Britain has a place at high table in the UN, or that Mrs. Thatcher's favorite ally, the United States, plays a leading role there. The real point is that the UN is not designed to supersede national sovereignty; it has no program of "ever closer union" leading to world government. The Charter of the UN, which she now constantly invokes, declares the rights of independent countries to govern themselves and defend themselves—and invite other independent countries to come to their aid.

In the phrase "international law," the word "law" can all too easily mislead. This is no product of higher authority; it is not handed down by legislators; it is merely a set of ground rules worked out by prudence, common sense, self-interest and consent. . . . The international law which Mrs. Thatcher finds enshrined in the UN Charter merely permits us to defend the interests of Kuwait if we think it in our interests to do so. So far, her use of the UN in her argument has stuck closely enough to that principle. The only danger, as perhaps she also realizes, is that if we keep returning to the UN for more explicit permissions, the public may end up mistaking those permissions for commands.

Noel Malcolm, "Mrs. Thatcher's Improbable Internationalism"
The Spectator, September 15, 1990

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Jefferson's Legacy

Gary J. Schmitt

Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press). 384 pp., $24.95.

BEFORE THOMAS Jefferson died, he sketched an outline of the monument he wished to have erected over his grave. The six foot high obelisk, resting atop a three foot square cube, is found a short walk from the back of his home, Monticello. In that same sketch, Jefferson also set down the inscription he wanted etched into the obelisk, adding to his instructions the injunction, "& not a word more":

> Here was buried
> Thomas Jefferson
> author of the Declaration of Independence
> of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom
> & Father of the University of Virginia.

The list is odd in that it ignores the fact that Jefferson was elected president. Indeed, so obvious is the omission that one can safely speculate that it was the way Jefferson, the enlightenment intellectual, thumbed his nose at the pretensions of everyday politics and political ambition. What counts, in the end, is personal freedom, private excellence, and one's role in promoting both.

Of course, the cynic might suggest that given how Jefferson's presidency ended—as Dumas Malone gently put it, "at ebb tide"—the last thing the man from Virginia would want to be remembered for is his time as the nation's chief magistrate.

Jefferson's difficulties were not those of the normal "failed presidency." They ran much deeper. In 1800, Jefferson had been elected on a Republican program of reversing the federal government's growing power over the states, resetting the balance between the executive and legislative branches, and overturning the industrialization policy of Alexander Hamilton. By 1809, however, when Jefferson left the White House, the reach of the national government had grown, the executive's power had expanded, and manufacturing had soared. The bitter irony of Jefferson's presidency was that he had completely swept the Federalists from the field electorally, but, in the end, had lost the war over the Constitution and, in some significant measure, the country's soul.

This is the tale told first and in unparalleled fashion by Henry Adams in his *History of the United States during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison*. "Working," as they admit, "in the long shadow cast" by Adams, Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson have produced *Empire of Liberty*, a study of Jefferson's statecraft that is, in many ways, as serious and probing a work as Adams's *History* is majestic. Their effort, however, is no simple retelling. *Empire of Liberty*'s focus is both more limited and, in certain respects, more broad: more limited in that what is being examined is the theory and practice of Jefferson's foreign policy; broader in that Tucker and Hendrickson argue that Jefferson's statecraft is not only the key to explaining how his presidency came undone, but also that it stands as a classic embodiment of

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those elements (legalism, moralism, pacifism, et. al.) that have informed, and continue to inform and afflict, American diplomacy.

THE PROBLEM facing American statesmen upon independence was set out three hundred years earlier by Machiavelli in Book 1, Chapter 6 of *Discourses*:

> If any one. . . wishes to establish an entirely new republic, he will have to consider whether he wishes to have her expand in power and dominion like Rome, or whether he intends to confine her within narrow limits. . . like Venice, locating her in some strong place, and making her sufficiently powerful so that no one could hope to overcome her readily.

The difficulty was that neither alternative fit exactly the situation in which the United States found itself in the years following the Revolutionary War. Clearly, the Americans were not in any way, shape, or form Romans; if anything, they were like the men of Venice, men of commerce. Yet America was not like Venice in that it was not located, or at least not yet, "in some strong place." The country was surrounded, or potentially surrounded, by imperial powers in the north (Britain), in the south (Spain), and in the west (Spain, France, and Britain). The American predicament was that it wished to be a "status quo" power, but could not become so until it had swept, as Rome once had, those powers from its borders. The dilemma that Jefferson and his Republican followers confronted was how to establish an "empire," even one of "liberty," without becoming themselves imperial. How Jefferson attempted to square this circle lies at the core of *Empire of Liberty*.

Jefferson's greatest triumph as president was the peaceful acquisition in 1803 of the Louisiana Territory from France. Not only did the Louisiana Purchase lessen the young nation's exposure to an aggressive European power, it also ensured that for decades to come there would be sufficient land to support the kind of agrarian society Jefferson thought necessary to sustain genuine republican government. As one chronicler of the period put it, gaining Louisiana was, with the exception of independence itself and the crafting of the Constitution, "the greatest political blessing ever conferred on these states." Moreover, it was, to the joy of Republicans, achieved by "pacific means." Without resorting to war or entangling alliances, Jefferson had gained an empire.

The schoolbook view of Jefferson's success in acquiring Louisiana is that it was a brilliant bit of diplomacy. Spain had just given New Orleans and the vast Louisiana Territory back to France. Republicans and Federalists alike thought it was unacceptable for a great power like France to have control over New Orleans and, with it, the Mississippi Valley. In Jefferson's words, it had the effect of making France "our natural and habitual enemy." As Tucker and Hendrickson put it: "The unimpeded use of the Mississippi was indispensable if the lands between the Appalachian Mountains and the river were to be secure against the danger of dismemberment or secession."

Jefferson's strategy was simple enough: threaten Napoleon with a potential alliance between the United States and Great Britain. If war began in Europe, the U.S. would take New Orleans, protected from the French by the Royal Navy. But Jefferson's hope was that Napoleon would see the "unavoidable" logic of the situation: he could not keep New Orleans in any case, and any effort to do so would push the United States into alliance with Britain. Holding, he believed, both carrot (potential American neutrality) and stick (war and alliance with London), Jefferson's plan was to make Napoleon see reason and sell New Orleans to the United States.

Empire of Liberty's argument, however, is that while Jefferson saw all this, he consistently balked at doing precisely those things required to give his strategy the backbone of reality. His administration's courting of Great Britain was half-hearted, at best. According to Tucker and Hendrickson, what Jefferson wanted was only the "appearance" of a possible entente, hoping that Napoleon "would be persuaded that the appearance

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foreshadowed the reality." Nor was Jefferson seriously preparing for war. The measures taken amounted to nothing that would have seriously impressed a Napoleon. The evidence suggests that Jefferson "wished. . . to avoid both war with France and alliance with England," believing perhaps that both were a threat to the "Republican experiment." Whatever the reason, Tucker and Hendrickson find in Jefferson's actions (or lack thereof) the soft center to his apparent statecraft of traditional power politics—in Jefferson's own words, his game was to "palliate and endure."

IN THE END, Jefferson's strategy of "playing for time" worked, but not because Napoleon had been moved by Jefferson's diplomatic maneuvering. What made him finally receptive to American overtures on New Orleans was the collapse of his own imperial ambitions in North America, following France's frustrated efforts to put down a slave revolt on the island of Santo Domingo, the jewel of France's colonial possessions.

Siding with Alexander Hamilton and Henry Adams, and against Jefferson biographers Dumas Malone and Merrill Peterson, *Empire of Liberty* judges Jefferson's greatest success to be more good fortune than sound policy. Not surprisingly, Jefferson's own assessment was different. The president came away from the events surrounding the Louisiana Purchase seemingly convinced of the effectiveness of their "own system" of "peaceable coercion" and "playing for time." According to Tucker and Hendrickson, Jefferson believed "he had escaped. . . the perils of reason of state. Necessity had reared its ugly head, yet he had resisted the temptation to give in to it. His success, he concluded, lay as much in the means he had employed—or rather not employed—as in the great end he had accomplished."

The elements of a new and distinctly Republican statecraft in hand, Jefferson quickly moved on to making it the cornerstone of his effort to acquire the Floridas from Spain. But, backed by no credible threat, shrewd American arguments on the state of Europe's balance of power did not impress even an old and decaying Spain. Still, Jefferson did not lose faith in his newfound strategy. Sooner or later, Spain would find itself involved in a war. At that point, Washington would "push" Madrid "strongly with one hand, holding out a price in the other," acquiring the Floridas, in all likelihood, without having to resort to war. If the U.S. was patient, its strategic objectives would be obtained, "and all in good time." "In good time," of course, the U.S. did acquire the Floridas—but by means (Madison occupied West Florida militarily in 1810) and in a time frame (Monroe bought the rest in 1819) that hardly fit Jefferson's sanguine assessments of his own diplomatic design.

Jefferson's problems in acquiring the Floridas from Spain did not move him in any appreciable way to reconsider the ultimate utility of his strategy of peaceful coercion. As the authors of *Empire of Liberty* make clear, the failure to do so would directly contribute to the ruin of Jefferson's second term.

The great question facing Jefferson's second term revolved around British sea power. War had once again broken out in Europe, forcing both the French and British to attack neutral commerce with a vengeance. The great brunt of this attack on free trade fell on the Americans, and the heaviest hand in seizing American ships and cargo was that of the British. In addition, the Royal Navy had resumed the high-handed practice of impressing from American ships sailors they judged to be British. Accumulating American resentment burst into rage during the summer of 1807 when a British warship pulled alongside an American frigate as it left Norfolk, demanded to be allowed to search for British deserters, and, when refused, opened fire, killing and wounding some twenty seamen.

Jefferson's options were essentially three: go to war, compromise American claims regarding the rights of a neutral, or try once again his strategy of "peaceable coercion." In the end, he chose the last, believing it to be the "lesser evil." The "weapon" of choice in

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this instance was commerce. By curtailing imports and by slapping an embargo on American exports, the administration hoped to bring Britain to its knees. Republican theory was that the British were critically dependent on American trade to keep their western colonies fed, their manufacturers supplied with raw materials, and the U.S. open as a vital market for their own industrial output. Over time, economic pressure would make it, according to Jefferson, in Britain's "interest. . . to do what is just."

The argument of *Empire of Liberty* is that Jefferson's decision to avoid war was in fact correct. Not only was the nation unprepared to go to war (the president and Congress having cut the army and navy to the bone) but it was far from certain that a war pitting even a prepared United States against Great Britain would have succeeded. In any case, Jefferson was not unsympathetic to resurrecting the diplomatic method that had gained him his greatest triumph as president.

Tucker and Hendrickson's unique claim is that, while a strategy of peaceful coercion might have been "central" to Jefferson's ultimate failure, the critical flaw lay elsewhere. Jefferson was committed to an effort to reform the international system by expanding the rights of free trade and neutrals. Rather than bend to the realities underlying the law of nations, Jefferson hoped to provide through that expansion more leeway for the rules of reason and commerce ("the exchange of wants") to act on and moderate the behavior of competing nations.

Yet, "in so closely identifying the pursuit of the national interest with the vindication of natural right," Tucker and Hendrickson argue, "Jefferson invested American pretensions with a kind of sacred character," which "made compromise difficult." Not surprisingly, the "fatal weakness" of the author of the Declaration of Independence was, according to *Empire of Liberty*, "not. . . his aversion to war" but an "outlook that made him incapable of reaching an accommodation with England on impressment and neutral rights." In "convert[ing] questions of interest into matters of right and wrong," the president left himself with no room to accommodate, or even truly appreciate, the overriding necessity Great Britain felt to contain Napoleon by maintaining its "key advantage"—control of the seas. Set against the vital interest London had in sustaining the European balance of power, no amount of commercial coercion was likely to succeed. And it didn't.

Unwilling to accept a treaty in which London agreed to moderate its worst practices on the high seas (but not totally relinquish its right to those practices), Jefferson left himself no alternative but an embargo. The results were disastrous. Not only did the embargo wreak havoc on the economy, it also fueled a secessionist movement in New England, stimulated the very manufacturing sector that Jefferson had long opposed, provoked wide-spread smuggling, and, in turn, generated draconian enforcement measures that vastly increased the power of the executive. And, ultimately, of course, the embargo did not prevent war.

In summary, Tucker and Hendrickson offer a thoughtful account of Jefferson's effort to build an "empire of liberty" without resorting to, or giving due recognition to, the stuff—arms, imperial ambitions, etc.—of which international politics has always consisted. As spelled out by the authors, Jefferson's presidency is characterized, on the one hand, by the setting of ambitious ends but avoidance of the hard means necessary to accomplish them, and on the other, by an unwillingness to compromise ends when faced with the reality of holding only limited means with which to pursue them. *Empire of Liberty* is at its best when exploring those classic failures.

Less convincing are *Empire*'s broader claims regarding the ultimate nature of Jefferson's legacy. According to Tucker and Hendrickson, Jefferson, as "bearer of a new diplomacy," has more in common with Woodrow Wilson than Alexander Hamilton. In Jefferson's diplomacy they see a bold, but finally flawed effort to break from "the practice and principles of the old European tradition of

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reason of state." "Along with Woodrow Wilson," Jefferson stands as "the great exemplar" of "the national conviction. . . that we have rejected an ancient reason of state, that we stand for something new under the sun, and that our destiny as a nation is to lead the world from the old to the new." In contrast to both, Hamilton accepted the fact that foreign affairs was, and would remain, defined by force and competition, and that American institutions and diplomacy would have to bend to that reality or themselves be broken by it.

This portrayal of the difference between the two founders and Jefferson's association with Wilson is, I believe, overdrawn. Jefferson's disagreements with Hamilton, in the final analysis, were not over whether these harsh realities could be transcended, but rather whether they could be lessened or substantially mitigated.

The acquisition of Louisiana is a case in point. Jefferson's threat to use force was a distant one, but a threat nevertheless. Hamilton thought it better to take New Orleans sooner, rather than later; Jefferson thought it prudent to wait, hoping that the imminent prospect of war in Europe would "clarify" Napoleon's thinking, but if war came, he was still willing to use force. Whose judgment was sounder is open to debate, but clearly there was no disagreement in principle about the necessity of acquiring the city, and if need be, by force. In the final analysis, Jefferson's strategy and object hardly fit within the "idealist" tradition.

But what of Jefferson's own "idealism," his "moralism" that precluded all compromise with the British? Tucker and Hendrickson fail to see fully the centrality of the issue of impressment for Jefferson. While they are right to argue that the attempt to expand the rights of neutrals was impractical, given the threat the British faced, they fail to appreciate that impressment was an issue that directly concerned the fundamental liberty of Americans (even if former British citizens) to be secure in their person from arbitrary seizure. Jefferson could no more accept that practice (or an agreement that implicitly sanctioned it) than he could repudiate the Declaration of Independence. Nor could Hamilton or any other representative of a government dedicated to preserving the "life" and "liberty" of its citizens. Impressment was as much a matter of the national interest as British occupation of forts in the Northwest Territory.

That Jefferson sometimes attempted to expand through his diplomacy the rights and liberties of Americans in questionable ways (though ways quite common to the politics of democracies), *Empire of Liberty* certainly establishes. But what he did was quite distinct from the kind of "progressive," world-transforming statecraft advocated by Wilson, and which continues to influence American foreign policy. The (German-born) "idealism" of Woodrow Wilson is the Declaration of Independence on steroids.

Empire of Liberty ends with a chapter entitled "Jefferson and Liberty: Exemplar or Crusader?" While Tucker and Hendrickson admit that his own statements "weigh heavily against any attempt to make Jefferson the crusader for freedom in the world," they also suggest that a "marked self-consciousness about serving as an example to the world may well act, under the proper circumstances, as a standing temptation to go beyond that role." Certainly there is some truth to this, given that the rights enumerated in the Declaration are those belonging to all men. Yet the Declaration authored by Jefferson is careful to spell out when a resort to war and revolution is justified. To ignore the caution exhibited there, is to ignore something that is as much a part of Jefferson's legacy as his failed presidency.

Jefferson was probably right to keep mention of his presidency off his tombstone. Yet, in what remains etched in stone, there is the outline of a statecraft both principled and sensible.

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The Odd Couple

Francis G. Hutchins

Sulochana Raghavan Glazer and Nathan Glazer, eds., *Conflicting Images, India and the United States* (Glendale, MD: Riverdale Company, 1990). 307 pp., $45.00.

WHY HAVE U.S. policy-makers repeatedly disparaged or ignored the world's second most populous country, a functioning democracy with one of the world's richest cultures, not to mention its third largest standing army? And why have India's leaders shown such enduring distaste for the United States, despite its substantial contributions to India's economic development? These questions, and what chances exist for improvement in U.S.-Indian relations, are probed in a thoughtful new book of essays entitled *Conflicting Images, India and the United States*. As editors Nathan and Sulochana Raghavan Glazer point out, the end of the Cold War was not anticipated by their essayists. This fortunate turn of events should nevertheless insure a fair hearing for their message—or at least a fairer hearing than the sort that has prevailed in the U.S. to date.

India and Pakistan both gained independence in 1947, just as the Cold War was beginning. Though "new" to the "modern" world, both states were also the latest manifestations of a centuries-old rivalry in which the United States was ill-advised to take sides. Because of the Cold War, however, the United States allied itself exclusively with Pakistan. Pakistan professed willingness to resist the Soviet Union's thrust southward, and the United States undertook to arm it, thereby making Pakistan vastly better equipped to compete militarily with India. In so doing, the United States became the principal friend of India's principal enemy.

Whatever one thinks of the wisdom of the U.S. decision to take Pakistan under its wing, the regional costs have been high. Like most imperially governed countries, India had wanted mainly to be free. Post-independence "alignment" with recycled imperial powers seemed to compromise those aspirations. Indeed, India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, saw in the U.S. preference for Pakistan a confirmation of suspicions dating back at least to 1927, when he predicted that, "The great problem of the future will be American imperialism."

Over time, relations between the U.S. and India grew steadily worse. The enthusiasm—not just tolerance—shown by U.S. leaders for Pakistan's military rulers led many Indians to conclude bitterly that in American strategic reckoning, "Democracy doesn't count." Meanwhile, the U.S. perception that India's non-alignment was pro-Soviet became somewhat self-fulfilling. Before long, Pakistan did turn its U.S.-supplied weapons against India, but the United States still "tilted" toward Pakistan.

Perhaps most insidious was the adoption by American policy-makers of self-serving ideologies about the supposed incapacities of Indians. "Nixon and I were accused of bias against India," Henry Kissinger related in his memoirs, *White House Years*. "This was a total misunderstanding." Why? Because their dislike for India was, he believed, rational.

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Kissinger explained: "Like the Middle East, India is the home of great religions. Yet unlike those of the Middle East, these are religions not of exaltation but of endurance"—in other words, productive of servile, rather than manly, ethics. He continued: "India had survived its turbulent history through an unusual subtlety in manipulating the psychology of foreigners." Kissinger pointedly contrasted the "intricate, complex Hindus" of India to the "simpler, more direct Moslems" of Pakistan, language as patronizing to our Pakistani allies as it is to Indians.

To be sure, Nehru could also be insulting. "As far as I can see," he commented in 1953, "there is neither breadth nor depth about the average American. . . . The United States is hardly a place where one would go at present in search of the higher culture." Such prejudices, it is hoped, may not long survive the Cold War itself.

TODAY, THANKS in part to a recent boost from the highly successful Festival of India—sponsored by the Indian government—Indian music, literature, and art are widely admired here. Americans may now encounter Indian culture through the music of Ravi Shankar or a film of Satyajit Ray—whereas earlier in this century first impressions might well have been formed while listening to a revivalist preacher denouncing "intricate, complex" Hinduism.

Equally encouraging is the Glazers' book, both for what it represents and for what it actually says. The book is a genuine dialogue in which American voices and concerns are balanced by those of Indians. Instead of an exchange of insults, we are offered an exchange of views, often highly critical but always well informed. *Conflicting Images* includes, for example, essays on the nuclear policies of India and Pakistan by a U.S. expert, Peter Galbraith, and by an Indian expert, N. Ram. Galbraith argues that a tough U.S. nuclear stance has been effective in constraining both India and Pakistan from developing a nuclear arsenal "by altering the equation each country would face in a decision to go nuclear." Ram, however, criticizes U.S. policy as counterproductive and shortsighted.

The book also recalls an earlier history of positive contacts between India and the United States. In "Gandhi in the Mind of America," Lloyd Rudolph makes clear that decades before Martin Luther King, Jr. adapted the confrontational techniques of Mahatma Gandhi to racial struggles in the United States, Gandhi was already stirring up useful controversy in America. And earlier still, in the nineteenth century, a few daring souls embarked on what Walt Whitman, a half century before E.M. Forster, labeled a "Passage to India." In addition to Whitman himself, several of the finest American intellectuals, including Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Herman Melville, exercised their imaginations on India's vastness and profundity. Motivated in part by a desire to free their new nation from slavish dependence on European culture, these writers all drew inspiration from what Whitman labeled the "elder religions" of India. Several decades after Whitman made his fictional "Passage to India," Mark Twain actually went there, and in 1897 published a lively travel diary, *Following the Equator*, in which he patriotically pronounced the Taj Mahal disappointing when compared to the day-after beauty of a New England ice storm.

Diana Eck's essay, " 'New Age' Hinduism in America," sketches popular American responses to Hinduism up to the present day, and argues that Hinduism in the United States is much more than just another obscure religious sect. She considers the Hindu movements that have gained U.S. converts to have made "the first inroads of a truly 'other' worldview in the Judeo-Christian West," inroads which may account for the intensity of mainstream American reaction against some of these groups.

Eck mentions one critic who commented with alarm that to describe yoga as a "technique of relaxation" was like calling target practice with a pistol a "technique of exercise for the finger"; and another who proclaimed

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the possibility of a sinister coalescence between modern Western secularism and Indian mysticism, with India's "cosmic humanism" cynically offering to spiritualize the West's "ontological vacuum and moral anarchy. . . . " While dissociating herself from their vehemence and alarm, Eck believes that such critics are right to think that the saffron-robed Hare Krishna chanters could prove to be not so much a "fringe" as a "vanguard." As Eck also emphasizes, however, such highly visible manifestations of Hinduism in the United States are not representative of Hinduism in India. Indeed, the Hare Krishna organization was actually formed in the United States, and, while drawing on traditional Hindu sources, can nonetheless be described as a peculiarly American phenomenon.

The Hare Krishna are in fact viewed with puzzlement by Indian immigrants, most of whom are middle-class professionals. Fortunately, these Indians are gradually acquainting their American neighbors with what Hinduism means in India itself, through annual observances of religious holidays and life-stage rituals such as marriages and funerals, which illustrate that there are accessible as well as exotic aspects to Hinduism.

The Indian immigrant community in the United States, which now numbers approximately half a million, was almost nonexistent before 1965, when U.S. restrictions on Indian immigrants were eased. An informative essay by Myron Weiner explores this community and its influence on U.S.-Indian relations and American culture. Weiner emphasizes the diversity among Indian immigrants and the fact that controversies in India often spill over to the United States. For example, the presence of a sizeable Sikh community has meant that Hindu-Sikh rivalries are now also a part of the U.S. scene.

Just how convoluted U.S.-Indian relations have become is perhaps best expressed in an essay by T.N. Madan, "India in American Anthropology." Madan demonstrates that the distinguished anthropologist Alfred Kroeber was severely patronizing: Kroeber proclaimed in 1944 that "Since 1200, little of a very high cultural order has been accomplished in India." Madan then criticizes more recent American scholars, particularly McKim Marriott, for celebrating the functionality of aspects of Indian society—such as the caste system—that progressive Indians desire to change.

When Kipling wrote that East and West would never "meet," he seems to have meant only that the one would never fully resemble the other. Certainly neither identity nor perfect compatibility is likely, or perhaps desirable. But the encounter of East and West, and of India and the United States, has already enlivened both countries, and is likely to become increasingly elaborate. In the nineteenth century, intellectual depth characterized the U.S.-Indian connection; now it has social breadth as well. More and more American businesses are springing up in India, and traditional-style Hindu temples are under construction across the United States. Yet, despite the end of the Cold War, U.S.-Indian relations are likely to remain tense for years to come. In both countries, policy-makers as well as private citizens will need to know more about the issues involved. *Conflicting Images* is an excellent place to start.

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What Kind of People?

Peregrine Worsthorne

A GOOD, logical, rational case could have been made for Britain not to get involved in any military action against Iraq. Britain is lucky enough not to rely on Middle East oil. Lots of Third World countries swallow their neighbors without Britain feeling the need to punish the aggressor. There were no treaty obligations with Kuwait. As for worrying about Iraq getting nuclear weapons soon, Israel can be relied upon to take care of that danger as efficiently in the future as in the past. If Britain had wanted to do nothing, therefore, that choice would not necessarily have been against the national interest.

But a rational consideration of the national interest is not enough to determine such matters. National character comes into it as well. It could be that the British people, or enough of them, feel that they ought to punish Iraq, not because it is in their interest to do so, but because it is in their character to do so, just as in the nineteenth century it was in their character to suppress the slave trade, which represented no danger to them whatsoever. . . and much profit. (In using the Royal Navy to put down the slave trade, incidentally, Britain did not hesitate to flout existing international law and has been blessed for so doing ever since.) And they did so, as the American sage Irving Kristol recently put it, "for no better reason than that such action defined the kind of power Britain wanted to be. It was a matter of national identity, not of foreign policy in any strict sense of the term."

During the Cold War there was really no choice about what kind of power we wanted to be; no conflict between the requirements of national character and of national interest. The two requirements simply coincided in the NATO alliance. Now they do so much less obviously. For in the post-Cold War world, in which there is no longer any serious Russian threat, a good *realpolitik* case can be made for European isolationism; for no military involvement with any other part of the world. What does it matter to the British, for example, if India and Pakistan destroy each other? Arguably the European countries no longer need foreign policies, or armed forces, now that none of them is remotely likely to attack another. But although such a passive role might serve Britain's national interest, would it suit her national character?

Early in World War II Churchill asked rhetorically, "What kind of people do they [the Japanese] think we are?" By that time he knew the answer. We were the kind of people who would stop at nothing to give the Axis powers a good hiding. At the time of the Falklands our resolve was equally clear. . . .

Peregrine Worsthorne is editor of the London *Sunday Telegraph* in which this article first appeared on September 16, 1990. This edited version is reprinted with permission.

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In the case of Saddam Hussein there is still no such certainty. . . . For, as I say, the rational case for committing British servicemen to die again in the desert is by no means conclusive. The Germans do not find it conclusive; nor do the Italians. Their instinctive attitude is, "Let the Americans do their own dirty work." For them, ironically enough, this attitude makes no rational sense at all, since, unlike Britain, they rely on Middle East oil. In terms of national interest they ought to care. What stops them caring has to do with national character, not interest. Germany's unwillingness to support the United States, for example, can be partially put down to its renewed fascination with Eastern Europe, which is its *traditional* area of economic expansion and political influence. France, too, at any rate initially in the crisis, seemed to revert to its *traditional* pattern of trying to extract small diplomatic and commercial gains from international turmoil.

Some Britons would want Britain to react like France, but most would not. If there is going to be dangerous work to do in the Middle East they would feel ashamed to let the Americans shoulder the burden on their own. Iraq is not Vietnam. . . . The vibes are quite different.

Next year will be the fiftieth anniversary of Britain's sending troops into Iraq to overthrow the pro-Nazi government of Rashid Ali Qailan. It was Britain that saved Kuwait from a previous Iraqi threat. There has been an almost continuous tradition of British involvement in the Gulf, even after Roy Jenkins and Richard Crossman wrote off the East of Suez commitment in the 1960s. . . .

Nations, like individuals, are creatures of habit. They like to do what comes naturally; respond to ancestral voices. Obviously we can no longer be the world's policeman on our own as we were when we put down the slave trade. But that does not at all mean that we cannot give invaluable help to America in this role. What is more, the job would enable us to put to good use the skills and experience which history has bestowed upon us.

Critics rightly point out that we are no match for Germany and Japan when it comes to wealth creation; or even for France and Italy. But when it comes to shouldering world responsibilities we are more than a match. . . . No doubt Britain's gentlemanly high culture and its so-much-mocked and deplored anti-industrial education system have militated against our being top of the productivity league. But perhaps now that is just as well, since in the post-Cold War world there is a new job to be done that desperately needs a major European country with a rather different kind of genius.

That job is to help build and sustain a new world order stable enough to allow the advanced economies of the world to function without constant interruption and threat from the Third World. Anybody who supposes that the United Nations, which is largely made up of the Third World, can be relied upon to sustain such a world order for long must be naive. Threats to this new world order from countries like Iraq will be regular and frequent, requiring instant intervention from the advanced nations, even pre-emptive action if and when Third World countries get hold of nuclear weapons. In the foreseeable future there will be only one superpower capable of rising to this challenge—the United States—and only one European power able to give instant support—Britain. . . . A united Europe would be quite useless in this new world order where a speedy willingness to use force is of the essence. . . . Once lost, the habit and taste for the exercise of power are not so easily regained.

Britain has lost that taste less than most. . . . For a time it looked as if this might be a liability, rendering us ill-suited to fit comfortably into a world where the wealth creators were king. But it is not quite going to be that kind of world.

Refusing to adapt, as Britain is accused of doing, can sometimes pay off, since the wheel of fashion comes full circle. Possibly Britain was in danger of clinging too long to outmoded imperial values. Thank God she did. For the civilized world will soon need them again as never before.

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Of Unstable Disposition

Owen Harries

WHETHER ONE regards it as a curse or not, we are certainly living in interesting times. A year and a half ago it was the awful drama of Tiananmen Square. Then at the end of 1989 revolution swept through Eastern Europe with intoxicating speed. Now we face a major crisis in the Persian Gulf, with the novelty of Washington and Moscow on the same side. And throughout this period great changes have been underway in the Soviet Union, to what end it is still uncertain.

All this signifies an enormous change in the *tempo* of world affairs, after several decades that were—at least outside what became known as the Third World—unusually static. During the forty-five years of the Cold War, most people believed that the world was poised on a knife edge. The sense of precariousness was reflected in terms like "the delicate balance of terror" and "brinkmanship"—and was deliberately cultivated by some, as with the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists'* clock logo, with its hands set at five minutes to midnight.

But in reality the Age of the Cold War—seen more clearly now that it is a completed thing rather than a still unfolding story—was one of the most stable and monotonous periods in modern history. Until the final precipitate collapse of the Soviet bloc, there was very little development throughout its forty-odd years. Not only was there no world war, but there was no serious danger of one. One has to go back nearly thirty years even to find a decent superpower crisis—the Cuban missile crisis—and, given Leninist respect for the correlation of forces and opposition to adventurism, that was nowhere near as dangerous as it seemed at the time. In Europe, the heart of the matter, from the beginning to the end hardly a shot was fired in anger, hardly a drop of blood was shed due to the conflict, not a foot of territory changed hands under duress, and not a frontier between the Communist and Western blocs was violated. Rarely in its history has Europe experienced such a period of stability. The wars that were fought occurred on the periphery, were well contained and never threatened to become general. Despite huge inventories and dire prophecies of inevitable disaster (which someone should anthologize, starting perhaps with that now forgotten master of two cultures, C.P. Snow), nuclear weapons remained unused, and nuclear strategy an arcane and untested algebra.

WHEN ONE has experienced something for a long time, it is easy to take its benefits for granted and even to dismiss it with contempt. That at least is one explanation of why, as we move into a much more volatile and unpredictable era, so many usually thoughtful people have been expressing impatience and scorn toward stability as a concern in international affairs. It is particu-

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larly interesting that their ranks include some prominent conservatives and neoconservatives. Thus, no sooner did President Bush declare last February, in what for him amounted to ringing terms, that, "The enemy is unpredictability. The enemy is instability," than William Safire replied with a column titled "Hail to Unpredictability," in which he argued that "stability" had now replaced "peace" as the excuse for not giving primacy to freedom as a goal, that it had become a justification for a soft-line, accommodating attitude toward communism in its terminal phase.

Even before that, George Will had poured contempt on those, especially George Bush, who put a premium on stability: "Enough of the worship of stability and of 'gradual' progress towards justice long denied"; and "At the moment when Western values are at last causing creative instability, only the Soviet Union has a stake in 'stability.' "

Conservatism's two superstar columnists are not the only ones who have expressed such views. Fred Iklé, a foreign-policy realist fresh from seven years in a top job at the Pentagon, has written in the same vein, adapting Dr. Johnson to characterize stability as "the last refuge of a reactionary." Earlier, and in a rather different context, Iklé had been moved to write colorfully of stability as "an idea that had spread beyond its proper habitat, like a fungus infesting much of contemporary discourse on foreign affairs and strategy" (*The National Interest*, no. 6, Winter 1986/87).

This rejection of stability by conservatives is at one level understandable. We are living in exciting and dramatic times, and stability is the most unexciting and undramatic of conditions, especially if you have been enjoying it for nearly half a century (Recall how thrilling and welcome the outbreak of war was in 1914, after an even longer period of prosaic, unheroic stability). Further, nearly all the changes taking place, at least until August 2, have been ones that conservatives had devoutly wished for over decades: the end of Soviet domination over Central Europe, the tearing down of the Wall, the easing of repression in the Soviet Union itself, Moscow's retreat from the "international class struggle," and all the rest of it. Why, it might well be asked, should conservatives cavil at "instability" in such circumstances? Is it not a synonym for "victory"?

The answer is that stability is a—arguably *the*—defining conservative value, and it is precisely in such circumstances as these, when sweeping changes seem entirely, unconditionally, and self-evidently welcome, that the conservative stress on the importance of continuity, gradualness, predictability, and order—and on the danger of large, convulsive, open-ended changes—assumes relevance. Of course, it is true that the stable conditions that existed in the Communist bloc were associated with repression, while the recent changes express the longing for freedom. But that was also true in 1789, when Wordsworth and others thought it bliss to be alive, and Charles James Fox swept aside any reservations about "the greatest event that ever happened in the world"; and it was even true in the spring of 1917, when what is now ending was just beginning. When the changes taking place are quite obviously retrograde and unappealing, conservative warnings about the unintended consequences that accompany rapid and radical changes are superfluous; it is only when they appear self-evidently good, when their appeal is great, that the warnings have point.

Those who denigrate the importance of stability point out that it is not an end in itself, and that, as Iklé maintains, it is necessary "to distinguish between beneficial and harmful stability." True—but just as true of instability, and just as irrelevant. It is not as an end in itself, but as a necessary (though certainly not sufficient) condition for sustainable, durable progress toward other desirable ends, including greater freedom, that conservatism makes the case for stability. It is really the case for reform as opposed to revolution, and unfortunately it is a case that does not lose its entire validity when the revolution in question is one to get rid of a particularly obnoxious regime. Even then, far from being

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a synonym for victory, prolonged instability may ultimately have the effect of souring the triumph and rotting its fruits.

Discussing his own psychological crack-up, F. Scott Fitzgerald once asserted that "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function." The current discussion of the crack-up of communism tends to prove him wrong, for some minds that are indisputably first-rate are finding great difficulty in holding two "opposed" ideas in any sort of balance: *first*, that there has been a highly desirable extension of freedom in Central and Eastern Europe; but, *second*, that its achievement has generated potentially dangerous instability in the international system. The tendency has been to proceed as if a choice between these two propositions is necessary, and to regard the assertion of the second as a denial of the first. But as the second proposition merely recognizes that a trade-off has taken place, no denial is involved. It is the rule, not the exception, for great gains to involve serious costs.

The form the costs are likely to take in this instance is not particularly hard to identify. Liberty has gained in the last year because a huge and formidable empire centered in Moscow is coming apart at the seams. But the history of the last hundred years is largely about the turmoil, hatred, fanaticism, and conflict that was generated when similar multinational empires disintegrated. To be concerned, therefore, one does not need a particularly nervous disposition, merely a reasonable knowledge of recent history.

Yet George Will lashes into George Bush for his "nervous longings for 'stability,' " and proceeds to ask scornfully, "Remember when presidents were supposed to lead the West in championing change?" The question is rather puzzling, and, taken seriously, it can only be answered in the negative. Since the time of Harry Truman, which is further back than most people remember, the two fundamental policies followed by all American presidents have been containment and deterrence, both designed to preserve stability, not to champion change. Or rather, in the case of containment, the underlying assumption was that preserving stability, by preventing communist expansion, was the best way of *promoting* desired change in the adversary, not a way of frustrating it. Events seem to have borne out this assumption.

The issue of stability is not an arcane one, of interest only in terms of conservative doctrine or international relations theory. It has a direct policy relevance, particularly in today's world. Deny that a concern for stability (order, balance) is a valid reason for committing American power, and you will have deprived yourself of what may be the most convincing justification—in some cases the only justification—for that commitment. Moreover, you will have done so at a time when the end of the Cold War has shorn many long-standing commitments of their old and well-understood rationale, leaving them exposed to challenge by those who take a very restricted view of America's interests—as has happened in the debate about the American commitment in the Gulf crisis.

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent crisis have had a sobering effect on the initial effort of intellectuals and academics to define the lineaments of the post-Cold War era. To a marked extent, that effort consisted of postulating that everything would become the opposite of what it had been: the Cold War had been bipolar, the new era would be multipolar; the Cold War had been marked by separation and division, the new era would be interdependent; the Cold War put a premium on military power, we would now witness the displacement of force by economic power. All this was not necessarily false, but it was certainly facile and glib.

Much of that chatter has now been stilled. For if that hastily assembled conventional wisdom had been right, the Gulf crisis shouldn't really have happened—or, at least, it would represent an aberration rather than a portent, telling us little about the spirit of the new age. For the crisis contradicts the new

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paradigm at every major point. The whole notion of multipolarity is called into question by the dominance of the United States, the passive acquiescence in American leadership by the Soviet Union, and the extremely feeble roles played by Germany and Japan, the two new candidates for global power status. Faced with this evidence, some commentators have changed overnight from being multipolarists to unipolarists, and now celebrate the fact that the United States stands supreme and on its own. (But if indeed that is the case, it is surely a matter for sober reflection rather than undiluted celebration. The consistent pattern of power politics is that a dominant power calls forth an opposing coalition of states to balance and contain it. Unless one believes that American exceptionalism applies internationally, one should anticipate such a development in the new era.)

Belief in the declining efficacy of force has also taken a beating since August 2. The fact that an otherwise inconsequential country with a population of only 17 million has been able to precipitate a major crisis and hold the world at bay for several months, simply because it had carefully built up its military power and was prepared to use it, dealt the belief a serious blow. The fact that the military power of the United States was the only thing capable of mounting an effective riposte to Saddam—that the economic power of a Japan or a Germany was virtually irrelevant—dealt it another.

The argument for the declining relevance of force depends very largely on the assumption that, with greater global interdependence, the nation state and the nationalism on which it is based are being weakened by both subnational and transnational forces. As a result, the very basis of the old system of anarchic power politics, in which power was the arbiter, is being destroyed. So goes the argument. But at a time when nationalist passion is threatening to rip apart the Soviet Union (and Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia—and even Canada), and when it has prevailed over ideological differences, opposed economic systems, and the vested interests of entrenched politicians to reunite the two parts of Germany, that argument is unconvincing. As the *Economist* pointed out recently, the capacity of nationalism to bring about both fusion and fission in the contemporary world seems not only undiminished, but enhanced.

The thesis that interdependence diminishes the importance of force has other weaknesses. For one thing, it is far from obvious that greater contact and intimacy necessarily diminish the kinds of friction and tension that lead to violence; in many circumstances they may well exacerbate them. And, surely, the more the international system comes to resemble a Swiss watch, with all the pieces intricately meshed, the more vulnerable it will be to marauders and blackmailers and terrorists—and the more it will need military force to defend it against such threats.

IT HAS become something of a cliché to claim that, as it is the first post-Cold War crisis, the confrontation in the Gulf will set the "ground rules" of the new era. That claims too much. In international politics, circumstances alter cases, consistency is a rare commodity, and rules are sometime things. If, say, in six months' time Brazil were to invade Paraguay, it is extremely unlikely that a grand coalition would immediately spring into action to put things right. (Indeed, we have already witnessed the non-precedent setting character of the crisis in the failure to respond to Hafez al-Assad's crushing of the Lebanese Christians.) And the belief that the United Nations has at last come into its own with the crisis ignores the certainty that if—or rather, when—one of the veto-possessing permanent members of the Security Council transgresses, there will, in the nature of things, be no UN-sanctioned embargo against it.

Better to forget the notion of rules and concentrate on those more modest things, lessons to be learned and morals drawn. Despite the understandable outrage concerning Saddam Hussein, who is indeed vile and cruel, he is a very familiar historical phenomenon: a locally powerful and ambitious ruler

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making a bid for regional hegemony. It can be anticipated that we shall see a lot of this regional imperialism in the new era: the greater freedom of action for middle powers following the ending of the superpowers' global rivalry; the opportunities created by the centrifugal and centripetal effects of unleashed national, ethnic, and religious passions; the greater availability of sophisticated weapons—all of these will encourage it. And if Saddam gets away with even half a success in the current confrontation, his example will be followed by neighborhood toughs around the world.

The "lesson" that the current crisis should have for Americans is not that whenever and wherever this kind of regional aggression occurs the United States should step in to stop and punish it. The cost and the difficulty of the present operation (which is, after all, against one of the *smaller* middle powers), and the fact that it would be beyond America's capacity to respond to two such transgressions simultaneously, rule that out.

What the United States should aim for is not consistency but discrimination. If an instance of regional imperialism has only regional consequences, there is no need for the United States to involve itself. The local forces can be left to work themselves out. It is only when the actions of a would-be regional hegemonist have consequences that threaten global order and stability—yes, stability again—that the United States, as the only true global power, should intervene. This it has done, quite rightly, following Iraq's attack on Kuwait, because the security of the world's oil supply was threatened. (Those who argue that Saddam would have sold the oil to us in any case, and would not have used it for political extortion, seem to assume that they are dealing, not with a predator, but with a good example of Economic Man.)

This is not a conclusion that will satisfy either the universalists, who advocate intervention on the grounds of principle or law whenever there is aggression, or the neo-isolationists, who resist it in virtually any circumstance short of direct attack on North America. But it is one that serves America's national interests.

On Finishing What You Have Begun

"I am not sure I should have dared to start; but I am sure I should not have dared to stop."

Winston Churchill on Anthony Eden's Suez Venture

The grand old Duke of York,
He had ten thousand men.
He marched them up to the top of the hill,
Then he marched them down again.
And when they were up, they were up;
And when they were down, they were down;
And when they were only half way up,
They were neither up nor down.

English Nursery Rhyme

"Foreign policy is remembered for its endgames, not the opening moves."

Henry Kissinger

"When you pull a gun, kill a man."

Walter Brennan in My Darling Clementine

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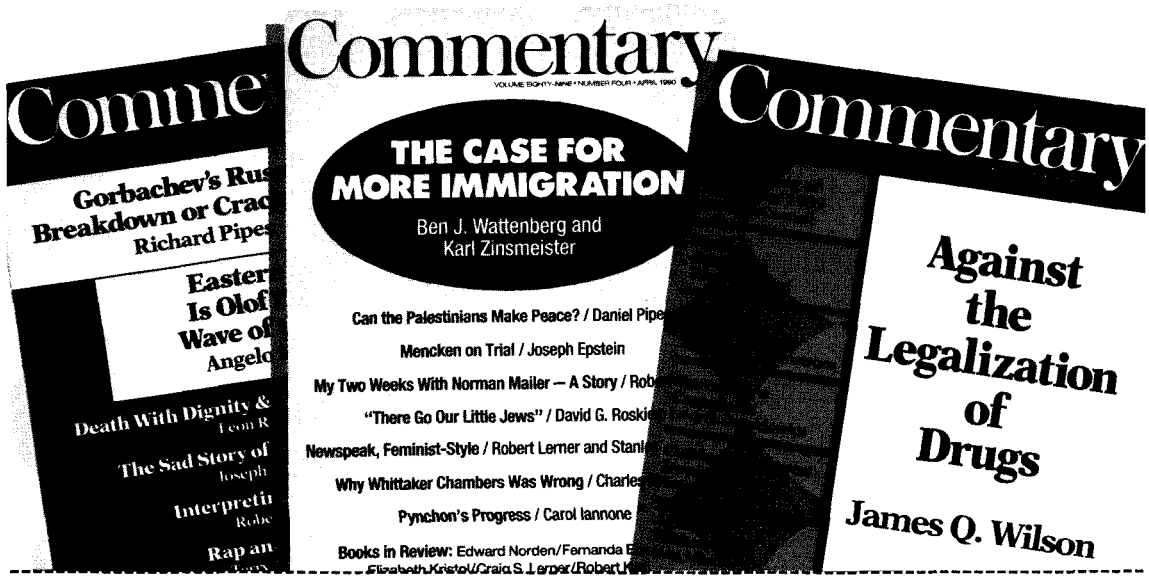
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